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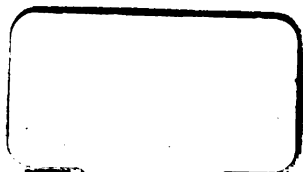


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THE
ILIAD OF HOMER

BOOKS I.-XII.

Homer

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Lately published,

THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE IN THE SPENSERIAN STANZA.

By PHILIP STANHOPE WORSLEY, M.A.

Fellow of Corpus Christi College.

Two Volumes, crown octavo, price 18s.

1

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THE SPENSERIAN STANZA

BY
PHILIP STANHOPE WORSLEY, M.A.
..
FELLOW OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD

VOL. I
BOOKS I.—XII.

Εἰς οἶκον ἀριστος, ἀμύνησθαι περὶ πάτρη.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
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P R E F A C E.

WHEN, after translating the *Odyssey*, I determined to translate the *Iliad*, my sense of the general character of the poem led me to weigh the several claims of three systems of verse as the means for representing it in English. These three were the hexameter, blank verse, and the Spenserian stanza. There is at first sight far less to be said for the last than for either of the former; but, after a few experiments in each, I was led to the conclusion that for me at least it was better to adopt it notwithstanding. My reasons for this, so far as the hexameter is concerned, will probably be shared, and have no doubt been anticipated, by many; but I can scarcely account for the fact, that the consideration which overwhelmed me in respect of blank verse has not, to all appearance, even presented itself to a single recent competitor in that field.

There are certainly good theoretical reasons for the choice of one or other of the two metres which, as I have said, I found it necessary to reject. If the English hexameter did but exist, the argument in favour of its adoption by a translator who could wield it would, I think, be unanswerable. Some presentable form of the metre may not be past hoping for, though Longfellow has done what only a deservedly popular poet could do to encumber the attempt with even more difficulties than justly belong to it. But nothing can be more certain than that a problem so intricate must be first solved in the field of original poetry. When the English hexameter is discovered, known, and widely appreciated without reference to any foreign rhythmical standard, it will be time enough to use it in translation. Till then, the name of it can only serve to adorn a theory against which there seems nothing whatever to be said in the abstract.*

* In my preface to the second volume of the *Odyssey* I have endeavoured to indicate certain rules which may tend to make the English hexameter more definite, native, and readable. I have other modifications to suggest, all centring in one plain principle; but I forbear to discuss the matter in this place, believing that Homeric translation is altogether the wrong field in which to make any new metrical experiment whatever.

As for blank verse, it is certainly by far the grandest and most epic metre yet existing in the English language; and, when we take into account the fact that the poems of Homer may be, without verbal distortion, rendered into it almost word for word, it would seem that no more suitable instrument could be desired. But let it be clearly understood what blank verse means. An essential condition to its existence is that not the line only, but each whole sentence and paragraph, should really scan. A series of blank lines, though each line in itself may be full of merit, or were it even perfect, is no more blank verse than good bricks are of necessity a good structure. The ability to deal with this metre is, of all attainments in versification, the very rarest, and the poets who have succeeded in carrying out the attempt through any long work may, even at this advanced period of our literature, be almost counted on the fingers of one hand. Moreover, the great masters themselves do not arrive at excellence in it *per saltum*: only in the full maturity of power can they bend it to their will. For my own part, therefore, not being aware of a single example of long-sustained success in the

management of this metre by any but our best poets, I have been content to leave it alone as the *non imitabile fulmen* of the supreme divinities. It is all the more dangerous an instrument for inferior talent to handle, because it is the only form of verse in which there is no mechanical difficulty to overcome. And, except under very peculiar circumstances, the practical objection of want of time must be held a valid one by an Homeric translator in this generation. He who would not take at least three times as long to render the Iliad in blank verse as to render it in any form of rhyme, even one so complicated as the stanza which I have myself employed, can have little idea of the voluminous majesty that belongs to every genuine utterance conveyed through this by far the noblest organ of English poetry.

I come now to the Spenserian metre, which, despite the claims of the couplet, will perhaps be generally acknowledged to rank, on the whole, next in heroic dignity to blank verse. This is a great consideration, which, were it even the only one, would still deserve to be reckoned against many in the adverse scale. But in truth the

very texture of this metre brings hopefully within our reach that vital characteristic with which the great masters, and hitherto none but they, have been able to endow blank verse. It is subject to a complex law, which effects all that can be done by the happiest of mechanical contrivances to combine the rolling amplitude of periods with the melody of individual lines. We have not only parts, but a whole ; not waves only, but a sea—a kind of effect to which what commonly passes for blank verse cannot for one moment pretend. Hence it may be readily surmised that the comparison I would suggest between it and the verse of Homer is one that requires breadth for its application. I do not maintain that a reader who takes eight or nine lines of Homer, and then turns to a single stanza of my translation, will be struck with the metrical analogy. But what I hope and believe to be true is this : that the perusal of a whole book of my translation will leave echoing in the ear a voice accordant in its main swell to the voice of Homer. If that sea-like rolling effect which is so characteristic of him comes out in my pages, though not immediately by the succession of single lines, yet

at last by the harmonious accumulation of stanzas, I have made out for the magnificent measure I have chosen a claim which cannot indeed be tested rapidly, but which, if true, will gradually recommend itself to favour. It seems worth while to call attention to this one vital point in favour of the metre, when handled as one may fairly hope to handle it. With regard to many other advantages, the experiment is left to speak for itself.

The case, then, as I conceive it, stands thus. The hexameter, if we could but find it, would prove the best instrument for our purpose. Blank verse is the best that is really known, but is so almost unattainable as to be practically non-existent, even in original composition, for any but one or two poets in a century, who may be able to justify themselves by storm. The Spenserian stanza is positively the noblest type of verse which any one, not overwhelmed by the consciousness of supreme poetic genius, should dare to attempt as a vehicle for translating Homer.

It remains that I should say a few words on my general idea of poetical translation. The great doctrine which I endeavour to observe, at

as little cost as I can, but to which, if necessary, I am ready to sacrifice everything else, is, that true poetry in a foreign language must be represented by true poetry in our own. If this cardinal condition is to remain unfulfilled, the meaning of verse is gone, and the work can be much better executed in prose. Homer is above all things a poet; and where this grand feature of resemblance is wanting, all others, however accurately reproduced, become low and trivial, except from the antiquarian point of view. It has been my ideal throughout to display the whole breathing form in the beauty of its natural proportions, and to avoid whatever seemed likely to insulate or to bring out in rigid and startling relief the nerves and sinews which minister to its vitality. When the translator of a great poem makes it his leading object to delineate minute details to the letter, he is, in fact, guilty of exaggeration to the verge of agony. True faithfulness can never exist apart from symmetry, the realization of which depends on an attitude of the mind in which every detail receives its hue from the general atmosphere of the poem. On like grounds, I have deliberately shunned the strong temptation to be ingenious.

If my work should present the average number of verbal dexterities, it is so far well; but these have never come directly within the scope of my ambition. Yet it would be wrong to infer that the tenor of my version is paraphrastic; for, holding a liberal theory, I have been the more careful not to abuse it, and my work must certainly be considered to belong to the class of literal translations. But lame English cannot worthily represent good and sound Greek; nor is it to be expected that corresponding verbal elements will, as a rule, coalesce with equal felicity in two distinct languages. My desire has always been to resemble Homer, not to ape him—a result which I believe to be far more accessible by means of a constant cultivation of sympathy with that tone of mind in which the Homeric style originated, than by the mechanical adherence to a catalogue of outward peculiarities. I shall not be found to have escaped errors of judgment; but in the endeavour itself to judge there is truth. No theory intended to supersede the exercise of individual good taste can be successfully applied to Homer. Whatever else may be right, a stiff translation of an easy and flowing original is irredeemably wrong. The

mind of a great people is broadly the same in all ages; and our language, to be at all like Homer's, must be now, as his was in the flower of its life, plain and intelligible to the multitude.*

* It may be well to add, that I have, as in the *Odyssey*, used the Greek, and not Latin, proper names. The only excuse for a substitution which belied the whole cast of the poem, was the absolute demand of custom. When this began to fail, and when it became evident that a new generation of scholars would certainly complete and popularize the reform, there was no longer anything to be said in favour of the old practice. Authority may be pleaded to retain a living error, but the attempt to revive a dying one must lean upon its own merits for support.

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BOOK I.

1

WRATH of Achilleus, son of Peleus, sing,
O heavenly Muse, which in its fatal sway
Thousands of griefs did on the Achaians bring,
And many a hero-spirit ere his day
To Hades hurled, and left their limbs a prey
To dogs and fowls of heaven: so the design
Of Zeus meanwhile was working forth its way:
Since to fell strife did at the first incline
Atrides, lord of men, and Peleus' son divine.

2

Who then of gods did to their feud impel
These twain? Of Leto and of Zeus the son.
Wroth with the king he poured his death-rain fell,
And a dire mischief through the host did run.
For his priest Chryses was by Atreus' son
Spurned, when he came the Achaian barks before,
And with large ransom would his child have won.
There in his hands Apollo's wreath he bore
Twined on a golden staff, and prayed the people sore.

3

Thus came the priest entreating all, but most
The Atridæ, the twain chiefs whom all obey:
"O sons of Atreus, and this well-greaved host,
Now may the gods that in Olympus sway
Grant that in dust the Trojan town ye lay,
And a rich spoil in safety homeward bring!
Only release me my dear child, I pray,
Take at my hands this ransom, reverencing
Child of high Zeus, Apollo, the far-darting king."

4

Then all the rest upon the old man's prayer
Breathed with a favouring voice their full consent,
Both to receive the splendid ransom fair,
And the priest hear, and to his suit relent.
But in his mind far otherwise it went
With Agamemnon, son of Atreus. He
Nursed in his soul a bitter fierce intent,
And drave the old man back disdainfully,
And a sharp word spake forth, and bade him haste to flee:

5

"Let me not find thee by the ships, old man,
Now loitering, or returning hither again,
Lest in mine anger, if thy face I scan,
Thou plead the god's wreath and his wand in vain.
Nor to release thy child shall I be fain,
Ere she wax old in Argos, in my home,
Far from her own dear land, across the main,
Sharing my couch and labouring at the loom—
Hence, ere my wrath take fire, if thou wouldst shun thy doom!"

6

He ended, and the old man, sore afraid,
By the sea's rolling multitudinous roar
Paced away silent, and the word obeyed ;
And from afar off did with prayers implore
Apollo, whom the bright-haired Leto bore :
"Hear now and hearken for the wrongs I weep,
Lord of the silver bow, who evermore
Chrysè and Cilla the divine dost keep,
And holdest high dominion o'er the sacred steep

7

"Of Tenedos ; O Smintheus, hear me now !
If to thee ever a sweet temple fair
I builded, or if ever holy vow
I paid, and fat thighs to thine altar bare
Of bulls or goats, and burned them to thee there—
If ever, if at all, I served thee well—
Hearken, remember, and fulfil my prayer,
And on the Danaans pour thy death-rain fell,
Till, sorrowing with thy darts, my bitter tears they quell !"

8

Thus prayed he, and Apollo heard, and lo,
Down in his anger from Olympus height
Came, bearing at his back the quiver and bow.
Loud on his shoulders, at each stride of might,
Rattled the arrows ; and he moved like Night.
Then by the ships he sat him down to aim,
Set the keen shaft, and drew the nerve aright ;
From the jarred silver a dire clang there came ;
And first the mules he chose, and fleet dogs for his game.

9

Next on the men themselves he still let fly,
On each side piercing with his arrowy sleet.
Burned the red funeral-fires eternally.
Thus for nine days the god's dire tempest beat.
Achilleus on the tenth, beside the fleet,
Called up to council the full host ; for so
The white-armed Hera caused him to think meet,
She feeling in her heart the Danaan woe.
Rose up the swift Achilleus, and his mind did show :

10

" O son of Atreus, would we save a life,
Time is, methinks, that we recross the deep,
Thus tamed at once by plague and battle-strife.
Yet were it wise from seer or priest to reap,
Or man of dreams (for God is also in sleep),
Some counsel ; if for hecatomb unpaid,
Or some false vow, Apollo grievance keep,
And if he deign that we this pest evade,
When with fat rams and goats his ire hath been allayed."

11

This spoken, he sat down, and rose up then
Calchas the son of Thestor : ablest he
And far most honoured of augurial men,
Who knew things past, and present, and to be ;
Who by his craft and power of augury,
Taught by Apollo the whole truth to scan,
Guided their swift barks o'er the rolling sea
To Ilion. He now, a most godlike man,
Kindly of heart, rose up, and in the midst began :

12

"Zeus-loved Achilleus, thou art fain to hear
Why the Far-darter is enraged ; but I
Will tell thee ; yet take thought, and an oath swear
In deed and word me readily to stand by.
For it must be that I a lord defy
Wielding dominion o'er the Argives all ;
And, when a king raves, the mean man must die.
Wrath at the last wins, though he smother his gall
For that day : tell me therefore, wilt thou heed my call ?"

13

And answering spake the swift Achilleus there :
"Take heart, reveal whatever doom thou know ;
For by Apollo, dear to Zeus, I swear,
To whom thou, Calchas, making prayers below,
Fate to the army still art wont to show,
None, while I live and see the light, on thee,
Of all the Danaans, heavy hands shall throw ;
Not Agamemnon even himself, though he
Far best of all the Achaïans doth now boast to be."

14

Then, gathering heart, the blameless seer returned :
"Neither for vow nor offering doth he blame,
But for the priest whom Agamemnon spurned,
Nor loosed his child, but sent him back with shame.
Therefore the god rains ruin, nor will tame
His fierce hands, ere at Chrysè one present
This maiden to her sire as when she came,
Unbought, unransomed, with fair victims sent ;
Then the far-darting god might hear us and relent."

15

This spoken, he sat down, and rose up then
Grieved in his spirit the wide-ruling sire,
Atrides Agamemnon, king of men.
Black swelled his midriff with disdainful ire,
Shone the fierce eyes like living balls of fire.
He first on Calchas, looking evil things,
Turned, and began : " Thou seer of mischief dire,
No good to me thy hateful voice yet brings ;
Prompt always from thy heart bad divination springs.

16

" Neither aforetime hast thou spoken good,
Nor brought to pass that any good might be,
Who now the Argives in thy miscreant mood
Teachest for all their troubles to hate me,
Since I released not for a splendid fee
Chryseïs, whom I much desire to dwell
Safe in my own house with myself ; for she
Seems to my mind in pleasing to excel
My true wife Clytæmnestra, whom she equals well

17

" In womanly good, not worse in anything,
Mien, form, or stature, wit and household grace.
Yet will I send her, though my soul it sting,
If better it be so, back to her place ;
Nor will I let these die before my face.
But now fit recompense with speed prepare,
That not alone of all men in this place
I go rewardless—'twere by no means fair :
For, mark ye all, *my* guerdon disappears elsewhere."

18

Then did the swift Achilleus answering say :
" Proud son of Atreus, greedier far than all,
How can the Argives a new guerdon pay ?
Not yet we know of ample stores at call ;
Shared was the spoil that in our way did fall ;
Nor is it just men's wages to take back.
But yield her to the god : we Argives all
Fourfold will render what thou now dost lack,
If Zeus the well-built Troia give us grace to sack."

19

Him Agamemnon answered with disdain :
" Think not in heart to steal upon me so,
Godlike Achilleus, nor spend craft in vain.
Shalt thou reap guerdon, I defrauded go ?
Dream it not ever—but this hear and know :
If ye the full worth of my loss requite,
Well—but if not, I force the boon these owe
From thee, or Aias, or like famous knight.
Loud let the man then rail, on whom my hands alight !

20

" But this hereafter. On the foaming brine
Launch we a black ship now, and set thereon
Due tale of oarsmen, hecatomb divine,
And beautiful Chryseis, and let one
Of these our chiefs be in command anon,
Idomeneus, or Aias, or the brave
Odysseus, or thyself, O Peleus' son,
Of men most terrible ! and with offerings crave
Peace of the great Far-darter, that our lives we save."

21

Him swift Achilles sternly eyed, and said :
" O mind impenetrable, and proof to shame,
How canst thou hope to be with zeal obeyed,
Or prick men forth to deeds of warlike fame ?
Not for these Trojans with my band I came ;
No kine, no horses, had they reft from me,
No harvests ravaged, nor done aught for blame
In rich-glebed Phthia ; for between us be
Lines of dark shadowy mountains, and a roaring sea.

22

" But thee we followed, O thou frontless knave,
Gaining much glory for thy brother and thee
On Trojan men, thy private cause to save ;
And all these things thou lackest grace to see.
Yea, now behold thou threatenest even me,
By force to take what I with toil did gain,
And the men's voice appointed for my fee.
Not that I ever equal prize obtain
With thee, when some fair city of its spoil we drain.

23

" Thine are the winnings, but for me the toil ;
Mine are the hands that rule the battle's flow ;
But, when the time comes to divide the spoil,
Large is thy claim, and to the ships I go
Poor in reward, yet happy even so.
Now will I hence to Phthia ; for indeed
Homeward to sail were better far, I trow,
Than thus, defrauded of my righteous meed,
See thee absorb our dues, and win while others bleed."

24

Then did the wide-realmed Agamemnon say :
" Fly with all speed, if so thy heart impel,
Nor will I utter a word to bid thee stay.
Others remain to honour me right well,
Zeus more than all—but thee I hate like hell.
Strife, wars, and battles are thy pastime dear.
'Tis but God's gift, if thou in strength excel.
Go home, and o'er thy vassals lord it there:
But, for myself, I reckon not, nor thine anger fear.

25

" For I declare, nor shall my hand be slack :
Since lord Apollo doth Chryseïs claim,
Her in my own bark will I now send back,
And with my own crew, even as when she came ;
And I myself, in payment for the same,
Will from thy hut thy guerdon bear apace,
Fair-cheeked Briseïs, thy proud heart to tame.
So shalt thou feel my power, and fear my place,
And others shall abhor to beard me to my face."

26

Then grieved the son of Peleus, and his heart
Was torn asunder in his hairy breast,
Whether his sharp sword to draw forth, and dart
On Atreus' son, and sweep aside the rest,
Or his mind curb, and hold his wrath suppress.
Thus while he pondered, the great sword he drew
Half from its scabbard ; but by Hera's hest,
Who in her soul alike the chieftains two
Loved and regarded well, from heaven Athene flew.

27

Standing behind him, by the golden hair
She took the son of Peleus ; he alone
Might see her, and none else ; he, turning there,
Knew Pallas, and the awful eyes that shone,
And to her spake in winged words anon :
“ Why com'st thou, child of Zeus ? Is it to see
The pride of Agamemnon, Atreus' son ?
Now will I tell thee what is like to be,
Life it may cost him soon to domineer at me.”

28

Stern-eyed Athene him in turn addressed :
“ From heaven I come thine anger to restrain,
If thou wilt yield, sent down by Hera's hest,
Whom for you both an equal love doth pain.
Come, let revenge sleep, and thy hand refrain ;
Yet follow him up with bitter scorn at will ;
For I avow, nor shall my word be vain,
Gifts shall hereafter, thrice more splendid still,
Quit thee for this ; yield, therefore, and our rede fulfil.”

29

Swift-foot Achilleus her in turn addressed :
“ Need is, divine one, that your rede I fear,
Though galled to the heart : I hold it far the best.
Who the gods heedeth, him they readily hear.”
So on the silver hilt he leaning there
Back to the scabbard thrust his sword amain,
Nor failed Athene's counsel to revere.
She, to Olympus taking flight again,
Mixed in the halls of Zeus with the celestial train.

30

Then did the son of Peleus, chief divine,
Speak forth again, nor let his anger go :
“ Eyed like a dog, deer-hearted, drunk with wine,
Never in arms durst thou with warriors show,
Nor lead thy people to assault the foe,
Nor with Achaian captains ambush lay.
This were flat death ; 'tis better far, I trow,
Through the wide army to reave spoil away
From whoso shall dare aught against thy will to say.

31

“ Reign on, devour thy serfs, fit men, fit lord,
Else, son of Atreus, thy last wrong were done !
Yet will I speak, and a great oath record :
Yea, by this staff, which can no more put on
Leaves, and the green life that for ever is gone,
Since lopt and naked from the hills it came,
Which they now carry in their hands, who con
Precepts of Zeus, and guard the law from blame ;
And, when I swear by this, I swear by a great name—

32

“ Surely one day repentance and desire
Shall for Achilleus all Achaians take,
And thou thyself, though filled with grief and ire,
Shalt not avail in profit for their sake,
When the fierce Hector through their ranks shall break,
And in the hot plain many thousands fall,
Slain by his spear ; this, verily, yet shall wake
Remorse within thy spirit, and grate thy gall,
Who me, the best Achaian, wouldst not honour at all.”

33

Thus spake Pelides, and the staff anon,
Stud-pierced with gold, upon the earth he flung,
And sat : on the other side scowled Atreus' son.
Then rose up Nestor, whose sweet-worded tongue
Dropt honey, and on his lips persuasion hung.
Two generations had quite fall'n away,
He living in old Pylos, whence he sprung,
And now the good knight o'er the third held sway.
He now, their firm well-wisher, rising up did say :

34

" Alas, deep sorrow on our land doth fall !
Yet shall on Priam and his sons alight
Hope, and a great joy on the Trojans all,
Hearing ye waste in bitter feud your might,
Ye twain, our best in council and in fight.
But hear me : younger are ye both than I,
Who mixed in youth with many a grander knight
Than you, nor yet did even those deny
My wisdom when I spake, nor pass it lightly by.

35

" Such can I ne'er behold as I saw then,
Peirithoüs, Dryas, Cæneus, Polypheme,
Exadius, Theseus, more like gods than men.
These, of all mortals, were in earth supreme,
And with hill-monsters fought a fight extreme,
Strength against strength, and slew them with their hand.
Me did these worthies their fit comrade deem,
And in old time I mingled with their band,
Called by themselves from Pylos and the Apian land.

36

“Yea, and according to my power I fought ;
But them no mortal, such as men now are,
Could meet in battle ; yet their minds I taught
With counsel, these unconquerable in war.
Heed therefore ye, for it is worthier far.
And thou, though valiant, yet forbear this thing.
Leave him the maid, nor his due guerdon mar.
Nor thou, Pelides, open insult fling,
But thy soul curb, nor lift thy hand against the king.

37

“For of all chieftains who the sceptre bear,
All to whom Zeus doth regal fame assign,
Lives not a man that may with him compare.
If thou art stronger, the praise is not thine,
And, though thou camest of a womb divine,
Still he is higher in place, as ruling more.
Thou too, Atrides, bid thy wrath decline,
Since for Achilleus I thy peace implore,
No churl, but in war's wreck our haven and our shore.”

38

And wide-realmed Agamemnon answering said :
“Old man, yea verily thou the truth dost tell,
But he, this upstart, aimeth to be head,
All would he teach, all rule, and all excel,—
But, for myself, I suffer it not so well.
If God so framed him that in fight he win,
Must he for this deliver a scorn so fell ?”
Then brave Achilleus with this word broke in :
“Now, if I all things yield to thy mere clamour and din,

39

“Call me a poor weak fool, a man of nought.
Others may tremble at thy will, not I.
But hear me out, and in thy soul take thought ;
Not for this maid will I in strife defy
Thee nor another ; what ye gave, deny :
But of all else which in my hut ye view
Nought shall be taken ; if thou doubt me, try.
Then may all these behold what I will do ;
Thy black blood in a moment shall my spear imbrue.”

40

Thus having fought with bitter words, they twain
Rose up, and loosed the council, near the fleet.
Pelides with Patroclus and his train
Back to the huts and fair ships made retreat.
Atrides on the main a bark complete
Launched, and a score of chosen mariners lent,
And for the god a perfect offering meet
Stowed in the bark, and fair Chryseïs sent ;
And wary-wise Odysseus for their captain went.

41

Thus they embarked : the mariners speedily
Set the white sails, and claved the ocean fast.
But Agamemnon then bade purify
The people ; who obeyed him, and at last
Into the sea the sacred cleansings cast.
Then to Apollo hecatomb divine
Of bulls and fat goats, till his wrath were past,
They offered, by the fields of barren brine,
And a fat steam to heaven did with the smoke entwine.

42

Such were the rites ; nor Agamemnon yet
Turned from his wrath, nor would his mind appease
From the fierce zeal, whereof he first made threat,
But to Talthibius and Eurybates,
His faithful heralds, spake in words like these :
“ Go to the hut of Peleus’ son, and bring
Briseïs fair ; but if it him displease
To yield her, I myself will do the thing,
Backed with superior force, and plant a yet worse sting.”

43

Thus the king spake, and sent them on before,
Charged with sad mission and a stern command.
Silent and slow they trod the barren shore,
And heard the long wave booming on the land.
So to the huts, and the ships near at hand,
Of the brave Myrmidons they came, and there
They found Achilleus sitting on the strand,
Hard by the black ship, in a dream of care,
Nor did the chief rejoice when he beheld them there.

44

But they twain, reverencing the godlike man,
Stood mute, abashed, and never urged their quest.
He in his mind first knew them, and began :
“ Hail and come nearer, bearers of the hest
Of Zeus and men, ye heralds ! In my breast
Not you, but Agamemnon, I accuse,
Who by your hand doth my fair guerdon wrest.
But thou, divine Patroclus, child of Zeus,
Bring forth the maid, and yield her : I will not refuse.

45

“But stand *ye* witness in the name of all,
Even the blessed gods, and mortal men,
And this proud tyrant with his heart of gall :
If in the future there come need again
Of me, to ward doom from the rest, then, then——
But now the frenzied fool thinks far astray,
Nor holds the past and future in his ken,
That so through knowledge he might find a way
To make the Achaians prosper in the battle-day.”

46

He spake. Patroclus his dear friend obeyed,
And from the hut led forth Briseïs fair,
Then to the heralds gave the lovely maid.
So to the fleet did they again repair,
And the maid with them moved reluctant there.
Meanwhile Achilleus sat him down to weep,
Hard by the black ship in a dream of care,
And called, with sad gaze o’er the sea’s dark sweep,
And hands outstretched, his mother, praying loud and deep:

47

“Ah me ! my mother, that a fate so brief
As that which I inherit should yet be
Not only thus, but bitter, and full of grief !
Surely, I thought, Olympian Zeus to me
Owed a large honour, though few days I see.
But me he honoureth not in truth one whit.
For wide-realmed Agamemnon my due fee
Claims for his own, and I dishonoured sit,
Cut to the soul with grief, and miserably submit.”

48

Thus prayed he weeping, and his mother heard
Beside her aged father, in the deep ;
And in a moment from her place she stirred,
And like a mist did from the white waves creep, *etc.*
And there sat near him and beheld him weep,
And touched him with her hand, and spake, and said :
“ Child, what is this ? and wherefore dost thou keep
Grief in thy soul, and tears of anguish shed ?
Speak, that we both may know it, and let thy wrong be read.”

49

Then with a heavy groan Achilleus spake :
“ All this, my mother, thou dost know full well.
Wherefore of me, then, wilt thou question make,
And urge me with my lips the tale to tell ?
At sacred Thebè we arrive, where dwell
Eëtion's people ; we the town destroy,
And a rich plunder in our hands that fell
Bring safe, and share it in the fields of Troy,
Choosing the fair Chryseïs for the king to enjoy.

50

“ But soon it chanced that Chryses to the fleet,
Priest of Apollo the Far-darter, came,
And of his child did the release entreat,
Bearing a countless ransom for the same ;
And in his hands the golden staff did flame,
Twined with Apollo's wreath, his sacred boast.
Thus the old man, to win them to his claim,
Passed up and down, beseeching all, but most
The Atridæ, the twain chiefs, the leaders of the host.

51

"Then all the rest upon the old man's prayer
Breathed with a favouring voice their full consent,
Both to receive the splendid ransom fair,
And the priest hear, and to his suit relent.
But in his mind far otherwise it went
With Agamemnon, son of Atreus. He
Nursed in his soul a bitter fierce intent,
And drave the old man back disdainfully,
And a sharp word spake forth, and bade him haste to flee.

52

"So from his presence back the old man went
In anger, and Apollo heard his prayer,
For he much loved him; and a shower he sent
Forth by the fleet, and slew the Achaians there.
So through the army a crowd everywhere
Lay dying, stricken by the death-rain fell.
And in our council did the seer declare,
For he the matter in his mind knew well,
The great Far-darter's wrath, and the atonement tell.

53

"Then first I bade them to appease the god;
But at the word came down on Atreus' son
Fierce anger in his soul, and up he stood,
And a threat spake, which verily hath been done.
For in a fleet bark they are sending on
That maid to Chrysè, and with her convey
Gifts to Apollo, the far-darting one:
And mine own virgin they have taken away,
Briseïs, whom this host had given me for a prey.

54

" But thou, dear mother, thine own child defend,
If thou art able, and to Zeus now pray,
If to him ever thou hast proved a friend—
For in my father's mansion many a day,
Thy deeds recounting, I have heard thee say
That thou alone of the celestial train
Didst from Kronion turn his doom away,
When in Olympus all the rest were fain,
Hera, Poseidon, Pallas, the great Sire to chain.

55

" Then camest thou, divine one, and didst loose
The Father, calling to the bowers of light
Him of the hundred hands, whom Briareus
The gods name, but by men Ægæon hight,
Who even his father can surpass in might.
He, at thy call, beside Kronion there
Sat glorying in his strength, and hot for fight.
And the gods shuddered, and drew back with fear,
Nor any more aspired their captive to come near.

56

" Now of these things remind him, and sit by,
And take him by the knees, if he will deign
To help the Trojans when the fight runs high,
And mar the Achaians, to the ships and main
Bruised heavily back, till many men be slain—
That all may reap the enjoyment of their king,
And even the wide-realmed Agamemnon gain
Sense of his own fool-frenzy in this thing,
That he the best Achaian durst with insult sting."

57

Him Thetis answered, weeping : " O my child
Why did I bear thee, and why nurture thee,
Heir to a sad life and a doom not mild ?
O wert thou sitting tearless, calm, and free
From sorrow, since thy death must early be !
Now are thy days both swifter and more drear
Than all men's : evil seems thy birth to me.
Yet to Olympus' snow-crowned summit clear
I with thy word seek Zeus, if haply he will hear.

58

" But thou meanwhile, abiding by the fleet,
Against the Achaians give thine anger vent,
And altogether from the war retreat.
Yesterday with the gods, on feasting bent,
Zeus to the blameless Æthiopians went,
And on the twelfth day will return again.
Then will I find him, and thy cause present,
And clasp him by the knees, and plead right fain ;
And verily I believe my prayer shall not be vain."

59

Thus she departed, and Achilles left
Angered in spirit for the maiden fair,
Whom, his due guerdon, in despite they reft.
Odysseus unto Chrysè came, and there
Down to the haven brought the bark with care.
Then they the sails take down, and the tall mast,
Loosing the helps, into his place they bear,
And to her moorings row the vessel fast,
And the stern-cables bind, and heavy anchors cast.

80

Then forth they came on the surf-beaten strand ;
Forth came the offering ; forth Chryseïs came ;
Whom wise Odysseus leading by the hand
Straight to the altar and her father came
And gave her up, and did his charge proclaim :
“ O Chryses, Agamemnon the great king
Sends back thy child, and in the Danaan name
Bids me this hecatomb to Phœbus bring,
Who 'mid the Argives now full many a woe doth fling.”

81

Speaking, he gave her in his hands ; and he
Gladly received his child. They from the shore
Drove up the hecatomb, and speedily
Ranged it in line the altar-steps before,
Then washed their hands, and the salt barley bore ;
And with raised hands the priest prayed loud and deep :
“ Lord of the silver bow, who evermore
Chrysè and Cilla the divine dost keep,
And holdest high dominion o'er the sacred steep

82

“ Of Tenedos, O hearken and give ear,
Who even aforetime didst my prayer attend,
Didst shake the Achaians, and my cause revere !
Now also to my wish fulfilment lend,
And from the Danaans thy fell plague defend !”
Thus spake the old man praying ; whom anew
Phœbus Apollo heard. And they made end
Of praying, the salt barley cast, and drew
The necks back first of all, and the fair victims slew ;

63

Then fold the thighs in fat, and raw flesh pile ;
Which the old man on fire of cloven wood
Burned, pouring on streams of dark wine the while.
Also the young men round about him stood
With forks to move the fire and keep it good.
But when the thighs are quite consumed, they taste
The entrails, and prepare the rest for food.
Then slices on the pointed spits they placed,
Which holding in their hands they cooked the generous feast.

64

But when the flesh was roasted with due care
And from the spits withdrawn, they fed thereon ;
Cheered was the spirit of each with dainty fare.
But when desire of meat and drink was gone,
Youths crowned the bowls with wine, and cups anon
Bear round to each in order ; and all day
They soften the god's mind, till fall of sun,
Chanting a lovely pæan : and far away
Joy took the soul of Phœbus, when he heard their lay.

65

When the light fell, they slumbered on the shore.
But when the rosy-fingered Morning shined,
Back to the wide Achaian camp they bore,
Sped by Apollo with a racing wind,
Which on the sails blew steadily from behind.
They sitting without sickness, harm, or fear,
Passed from the island with rejoicing mind,
While the ship, lifted through the billowy mere,
Rushed whitening in her lee the loud waves far and near.

66

When at the wide camp they arrived, then first
High on the sands they drew the bark, and set
The long stays; thence amid the huts dispersed.
Meanwhile the son of Peleus, wrathful yet,
No more frequenting where the council met,
Nor seen in battle, his own soul did mar,
And by the black ships in a stern regret
Sat burying in his breast, withdrawn afar,
Thirst for tumultuous things, the war-shout and the war.

67

On the twelfth sunrise the gods' train entire
Back to Olympus, led by Zeus, repair,
And Thetis, mindful of her son's desire,
Sprang from the wave, and mounting the great air
Flew to the ridged Olympus, and found there
Far-voiced Kronion on the topmost crest
Sitting apart from all; and she came near
And with her right hand took his beard, and pressed
Low with her left his knees, and the great Sire addressed:

68

"Zeus Father, hear me and my wish fulfil,
If ever, if at all, good help I gave
By word or work, when others meant thee ill!
Honour my child, and from reproach him save,
Singled from all men for an earlier grave,
Yet now by Agamemnon in despite
Reft of the guerdon of his courage brave.
Avenge him thou: make Troy prevail in fight,
Till the Achaians rue it, and my son requite."

69

Thus she entreated : but the cloud-wrapt Sire
Paused answerless long time ; and Thetis still
Grew where she clung, still pressing her desire :
“ Grant me thy nod, or even deny my will,
Why not ? and school me to this utmost ill—
How that no god is so condemned as I.”
But he : “ Sad work this on Olympus hill,
If for thy sake queen Hera I defy,
And she arise and taunt me, when the gods are by.

70

“ For on her tongue this scandal night and day
Burns, that I help the Trojans in the fight.
Yet now, ere she take knowledge, go thy way,
And I thy matter will perform aright.
Yea, to confirm the promise, in thy sight
I nod my head ; for mightier sign than this
None goeth from me in the heavenly height.
What with a nod I sanction, that, I wis,
Irrevocable stands, fails not, nor ends amiss.”

71

Then did Kronion his dark brows incline ;
Streamed from the King's head the ambrosial hair ;
Shook to its centre the great realm divine.
Thus having planned, on diverse ways they fare,
She to the main deep from the crystal air
Of clear Olympus, Zeus to his own hall
And with one mind the gods before him there
Rose up, nor durst await their Father's call,
But, ere he came, rose up, and in his front stood all.

72

There he sat down, nor Hera's eye beguiled,
Who knew that with him had conspiring been
Silver-foot Thetis, the old sea-god's child.
She then Kronion plied with angry spleen :
" Who of the gods hath now conspiring been
With thee, false schemer ? 'Tis thy joy for ever
To hatch dark sentences alone, unseen,
And from thy counsels thine own wife to sever ;
Thou of thine own free will dost show them to me never."

73

And answer made the Sire of gods and men :
" Hera, forbear ; hope not within thy heart
Thus the whole current of my thoughts to ken.
This were not easy, though my wife thou art.
All that is fit will I myself impart,
Nor god nor man shall know it before thee.
But when I list, from all the gods apart,
Counsels to ponder, and my will decree,
Ask not about such matters, nor too curious be."

74

And large-eyed Hera spake with darkling brow :
" This passes all, grim tyrant,—words like these !
When have I asked thee or enquired till now,
Or when not left thee to consider at ease ?
Now, much I fear me, thou art fain to please
Silver-foot Thetis, the old sea-god's child,
Who came up early, clasped thee by the knees,
And, I not doubt it, thy consent beguiled
To cut off many Achaians, and exalt her child."

75

Fierce did the Cloud-compeller Zeus reply :
" Shrew, thou are verily apt enough to guess ;
Yet not, through hovering on my privacy,
Shalt thou succeed more, or be hated less,
But feel the rather a yet worse distress.
If so it is, it so seemed good to me.
But sit thou silent, and thy fire suppress,
Lest all the gods that in Olympus be
Save not when I come near to lay rough hands on thee."

76

He spake, and large-eyed Hera, sore afraid,
Heard him, and silent sat, bending her heart,
While a low wrath did all the gods pervade.
Then first began Hephæstus, famed in art,
Yearning to help his mother Hera's part :
" Now of a truth dire mischiefs will come in,
If for mere mortals such a feud ye start,
And bandy about on high your troublous din.
Joy from the feast will fly, and all the worse things win.

77

" Therefore I bid my mother, in her much wit,
Our dear lord humour, lest he ruffle again,
And mar our feast. For if it seemed him fit,
Down with his thunder could he roll amain
These realms uprooted. Thou in gentle strain
Soothe him, since none to brave his power may dare.
So will his mind rest favourable again."
He spake, and rose, the double cup to bear,
And gave it to his mother, and addressed her there :

78

"Yield now, my mother, and, though grieved, endure,
Lest I behold thee with mine eyes, though dear,
Beaten and bruised, and seek in vain a cure ;
For the lord Zeus can soon teach rebels fear.
Me once, reluctant to his rule austere,
Clean o'er the crystal stair by the foot he flung.
All day I fell, and dropped, as night drew near,
On Lemnos in the sea, while bare life hung
Yet round me, and found help the Sintian tribes among."

79

He spake, and Hera took the cup, and smiled.
From left to right to the celestials all
Passed with sweet nectar white-armed Hera's child.
Then on the blest did quenchless laughter fall,
As the lame god puffed busily through the hall.
Thus for that whole day on the banquet choice,
Till the sun fell, they feasted, nor at all
Ceased in Apollo's sweet harp to rejoice,
And strain of Muses answering with their lovely voice.

80

But when the bright lamp of the sun went down,
Homeward they passed, retiring each to bed.
For lame Hephæstus, god of high renown,
Had with fine science, to serve each in stead,
Fair houses built, and roofed them overhead.
Himself to his own couch the Sire consigned,
Couch from of old in season visited
Whene'er calm sleep is pleasant to his mind,
And at his side queen Hera in her grace reclined.

BOOK II.

1

THUS gods and white-plumed warriors all the night .
Slept ; but Zeus brooded in his wakeful breast
Doom for the host, and to exalt the right
Of Peleus' son ; and at the last seemed best
To call the Dream-god, and give this behest :
“ Fly, Dream, and seek the Achaian ships anon,
Find entry to the hut wherein doth rest
Imperial Agamemnon, Atreus' son,
And there speak all my charge, and let my will be done.

2

“ Bid him the long-haired Danaans arm with speed,
For that now verily wide-streeted Troy
Waits to be captured : it is so decreed.
No more the gods, who the far heaven enjoy,
Mind against mind in mutual feud employ.
Hera with supplication all hath bent ;
Fate will ere long the Trojan power destroy.”
Thus spake Kronion, and the Dream-god sent.
He with quick zeal obeyed, and to the black ships went.

3

There found he Agamemnon, Atreus' son,
Laid mute, and covered with ambrosial rest,
Then in his mien like Nestor, Neleus' son,
Whom of all elders the king counted best,
Stood near his pillow, and the chief addressed :
"Sleepest thou, child of Atreus? 'Tis not fit
Thus that a statesman the whole night take rest,
While on his neck such cares of empire sit.
Zeus sends me here, whom sorrow for thy pain hath smit.

4

"He bids thee the Achaians arm with speed,
For now, now verily wide-streeted Troy
Waits to be captured : it is so decreed.
No more the gods, who the far heaven enjoy,
Mind against mind in mutual feud employ.
Hera with supplication hath bent all ;
Zeus will ere long the Trojan power destroy.
But stay thou mindful, and my words recal,
When the bland honey of sleep shall from thine eyelids fall."

5

Thus spake the Dream-god, and then passed away,
And left the son of Atreus building there
Fond schemes, and fated to a swift decay,
Flattering his heart on that same day to bear
Doom to sieged Ilion—a dream void as air !
Nor in his breast the mind of Zeus he knew,
What griefs, what groans, the god would yet prepare
In the rough onset, and with hate pursue
Trojans alike and Danaans, till the fight they rue.

6

He then, encircled with the voice divine,
On the couch sitting, for his sleep was past,
Girt round his loins a tunic soft and fine,
New-made, and o'er it the great mantle cast,
Linked to his feet the shining sandals fast,
Then in its scabbard the fair-hilted brand
Slung by the belt, and took the sceptre last,
Heirloom imperishable from hand to hand ;
So to the camp went down and the surf-beaten strand.

7

When passed to far Olympus Dawn divine,
To Zeus and all the gods proclaiming day,
He to the heralds did their charge assign,
Now to the brave Achaïans to convey
Calls to the general council, who straightway
Make proclamation, and the people bring.
But first the high-souled elders meet; and they,
Hard by the ship of Nestor, Pylian king,
Hear Agamemnon's speech, he uttering a shrewd thing :

8

" O friends, the Dream-god found me in the night,
While I lay covered with ambrosial rest.
Most like to Nestor, the Gerenian knight,
In form, mien, size, I thought him in my breast ;
And he stood near me, and in words addressed :
' Sleepest thou, child of Atreus ? 'Tis not fit
Thus that a statesman the whole night take rest,
While on his neck such cares of empire sit.
Zeus sent me here, whom sorrow for thy pain hath smit.

9

“He bids thee the Achaïans arm with speed,
For now, now verily wide-streeted Troy
Waits to be captured : it is so decreed.
No more the gods, who the far heaven enjoy,
Mind against mind in mutual feud employ.
Hera with supplication all hath bent ;
Zeus will ere long the Trojan power destroy.
But thou forget not.’ Then his flight he bent
Far from my couch, and slumber from mine eyelids went.

10

“Come therefore, let us arm, if yet we may,
The sons of the Achaïans for the fight.
Yet will I first with words their spirit essay,
And in the swift ships move them to take flight :
Whom ye, each pleading from his place, incite
Here to remain.” This spoken, he sat down ;
And rose up Nestor, the Gerenian knight,
Ruler of sandy Pylos, Neleus’ son,
Who with kind thought harangued them, and spake forth anon :

11

“Friends, captains, holding in your rule and care
The Argive host, if other than the king
This dream had told, we might suspect a snare,
And turn from, rather than believe, the thing.
But now he saw it, whom we honour as king ;
Come therefore, arm the Achaïans if we may.”
So from the council ; and in haste upspring
All the high chiefs, their master to obey ;
And the full crowd meanwhile came pouring every way.

12

As tribes of thick bees in the vernal hours,
Launched in a long swarm on the luminous air,
Fly from the rock, and cluster upon the flowers,
And still fly, so innumerable they fare,
Thus tribes innumerable flocked hurrying there
From camp or fleet in many a moving cloud.
Rumour, God's herald, set the host aflame,
Spurred them to march forth ever, and cried aloud,
While on the deep shore clustered the continual crowd.

13

On came the troops, and a great uproar made,
And, as they sat, the earth groaned far and near,
And with the noise wide air was overlaid.
Passed up and down with voices loud and clear
Nine heralds, who compel them to give ear
To the divine kings, and their cry withstand.
Soon they obeyed, and sat with zeal to hear.
Then Agamemnon rose, sceptre in hand,
That sceptre by Hephæstus deftly wrought and planned.

14

He to Zeus gave it, Sire of gods and men,
And high Zeus to the courier Argicide ;
Hermes to Pelops, fiery knight ; and then
Pelops to sovran Atreus ; he then died,
And to Thyestes, lord of pastures wide,
Left it ; again to Agamemnon he,
To wield far sovereignty on every side
O'er Argos and the islands of the sea.
Leaning thereon he rose, and spake advisedly :

15

" Friends, heroes, servants of the god of war,
Zeus in deep mischief hath ensnared me fast,
(Hard fate !) who promised and confirmed before
My safe return home, when the siege was past.
Yet hath he now an ill deceit forecast,
And in no glorious plight, with thousands slain,
Sends me to Argos ; for his power is vast,
And thus it pleased him in his mind to ordain,
Who many states hath ruined, and will ruin again.

16

" Shame is to us, and for our sons to hear,
That such a people as this, so many and true,
Toils inexhaustible with sword and spear
Wage to no end for ever—and they so few,
So scant our foemen, yet no term in view !
For if a sworn truce we should now demand,
And take clear reckoning of the armies two,
Trojans, to wit, domestic in the land,
And all us that be here, upon the Asian strand—

17

" If we the Achaians stood by tens in line,
And each ten chose a Trojan, wine to pour,
Tens without number would be wanting wine.
I say by so much are the Achaians more
Than the whole race that dwelt in Troy before.
But now all states that lie around send in
Troops of auxiliars, and the poise restore.
And these still thwart me, and my followers thin,
So that in vain I hope fair Ilion's town to win.

18

"Nine are the years from mighty Zeus now gone;
Our hulls lie rotten, and the firm ropes fail;
Our wives and little ones sit lingering on,
By turns expect us, and by turns bewail;
But we strive helpless, and in nought prevail.
Come, therefore, hear me, let us all consent
Home to that dear land in our ships to sail,
Since the work speeds not, for the which we went,
Nor shall we take wide Troia, for our strength is spent."

19

Thus spake he, and the soul within them stirred,
And a great impulse through the host did creep,
Wherever his design had not been heard.
And the mass surged, as the long waves that leap,
Foam-crested, in the wild Icarian deep,
When lord Zeus lashes with two winds the main;
Or as when Zephyr comes with ravening sweep,
And bows the tall ears in a field of grain—
So heaved the Achaian concourse, and so ebbd again.

20

They to the black ships with a general cheer
Rushed, and the dust-cloud from beneath their feet
Stood like a dome uplifted in the air.
Each calls to other to draw down the fleet,
All clear the trenches, these with those compete.
Then the long stays they loosened, and a cry
Of home-desiring men the far heaven beat.
Soon against Fate had they made good to fly,
But to Athene spake queen Hera in the sky:

21

"Tell me, thou tireless Virgin, seed of Zeus,
Shall thus the Argives to their native coast
Fly, and such labour spend to no good use,
And to king Priam and the Trojan host
Leave Argive Helen for their crowning boast,
For whom so many Achaians have been slain?
But come now, seek them where they flock the most,
And with thy mild persuasions each restrain,
Nor let them launch this day their ships into the main."

22

She ended, nor Athene, the stern-eyed,
Hearing obeyed not, but with speed anon
Down from the summit of Olympus hied,
And to the camp and the fleet ships came on;
There found Odysseus, who like place did own
With gods in wisdom, standing far away;
Nor touched he the black ship, but all alone
Stood, and deep sorrow on his soul there lay.
Then did stern-eyed Athene standing near him say:

23

"Zeus-born Laertiades, Odysseus brave,
Will ye thus homeward to your native coast
Fly in the well-benched ships across the wave,
And to king Priam and the Trojan host
Leave Argive Helen for their crowning boast,
For whom so many Achaians here lie slain?
But come now, hasten where they flock the most,
And with thy mild persuasions each restrain,
Nor let them launch this day their ships into the main."

24

She spake, and the celestial voice he knew,
And on the instant he set forth to run,
And from his shoulders the wide mantle threw,
Which Ithacan Eurybates anon
Took care of, his true herald; so passed on
Odysseus, and the sceptre of command
Received from Agamemnon, Atreus' son,
Heirloom imperishable from hand to hand;
Thence to the ships Achaian, ere they left the land.

25

Whom of the chiefs or notables he found,
Him with a mild persuasion he addressed :
"Sir, keep the people back, stand well thy ground;
Fear ill becomes thee; thou hast wrongly guessed
The king's mind, for he doth but make a test :
Pause, ere he strike; all heard not what he said
In council; in his anger I fear lest
He hurt the Achaians; a king's wrath is dread;
Him the great Father loves, and will uphold his head."

26

Whom of the crowd he met, and bawling caught,
Soundly he swung him with the staff, and said :
"Sirrah, obey thy betters, and be taught;
For who counts thee, faint heart and empty head,
In word or war, thou feeble than the dead?
For know, we Argives cannot all be king,
Nor shall the mass lead and the few be led;
Loose kingship is not good; let one be king,
He to whom Zeus Kronion doth the sceptre bring."

27

So did he rule the army, and again
Back with a sound from fleet and camp they pour,
As when the wave of some loud-roaring main
Rolls in a wide-spread thunder upon the shore.
And all sat waiting; but yelled more and more
Thersites, railing in his spirit of gall,
He only, and with foul words foaming o'er,
Fools to make laugh, though wit were none at all.
He was the worst that fought beneath the Ilian wall.

28

Bow-legged he was, and in the one foot lame,
Round were his shoulders, o'er the sunken chest
Drawn, and above them a mean skull there came,
Patched with scant hair, and to a peak comprest.
He to the son of Peleus hateful pest,
And to Odysseus ever, against them twain
Railed of set use, now ruffling up his crest
Hit glorious Agamemnon in sharp strain,
And deep the Achaians goaded, as he shrilled amain:

29

"After what matter art thou hankering yet,
Fell spawn of Atreus? for thy huts o'erflow
With brass and women, the outcome of our sweat.
Gold wilt thou lust for, which some warrior foe
Shall for the ransom of his son bestow,
Captured by me, or other valiant man?
Or some new mistress art thou hot to know,
While we starve silent? But 'tis no good plan
To bring, for one lord's sake, whole peoples under ban.

30

“Shame on ye, slaves! O women, and not men!
Turn the fleet homeward, let us sail away,
And leave him like a lion in his den
To sleep off his full stomach as he may,
And in his own strength show the hunters play;
Since he hath wronged his better, and made him fall,
Spoiling the son of Peleus of his prey—
But in Achilleus’ liver is milk, not gall,
Else, haughty chief, this outrage were thy last of all.”

31

Thus yelled Thersites, and the king defied.
But in a moment, ere the cry was dead,
Stood the divine Odysseus at his side,
And with dark brows in bitter scorn he said:
“Wretch, thou wouldst better keep a tongueless head,
Nor against kings thy scurril gibes employ,
Thine!—for I say none feebler or worse-bred
Came of all mortals to the land of Troy,
Who sailed with Atreus’ sons, fair Ilion to destroy.

32

“’Twere better among lords thy throat to tame,
Not jeer aloft, thus watchful for retreat.
Not yet, I tell thee, is it known to fame
If we retire in glory or defeat.
But thou the while art scorning from thy seat
Imperial Agamemnon. If it be
That to the Danaan heroes it seems meet
With gifts to load him, what is that to thee,
That thou must find sharp words, and deal injuriously?

33

"Take now my warning, it is no mere scoff :
Find I thee fooling any more in vain,
Then from the shoulders be my head struck off,
Nor call me father of my child again,
If the whole raiment from thy hide amain
I strip not, even robe and tunic both,
And with thy loins bare to the ships in pain
Drive thee with hot blows, howling and full loth—
Thus once for all I swear, and I will keep my oath."

34

He, ending, the man's back and shoulders twain
Swinged with the staff: he, cowering in sad bale,
Curled from the smiter, and shed tears like rain,
While from his skin there rose a blood-red weal.
He then, in silly amazement, sat there pale,
Quailing with terror of the golden staff,
Wiping his eyes, and with no heart to rail ;
And the great army, though content but half,
Laughed at his tribulation a sweet pealing laugh.

35

And one toward another looked and said :
"Gods, but Odysseus hath done all things well,
Chief in good plans, of war the life and head ;
But this last work doth all the rest excel
Which to his glory we yet found to tell,
Who from the council, where so loud he sang,
This ungraced ruffian doth now quench and quell.
Henceforth he bites not with a dangerous fang,
Nor will his brave heart spur him to the wild harangue."

36

Thus spake the many, and that warrior feared,
Sceptre in hand, stood forth, Odysseus brave.
Stern-eyed Athene at his side appeared,
Like herald, and along the tumult's wave
Cried to the host, and sign of silence gave,
That all the Achaian soldiers, last and first,
Nearest and farthest, the chief's counsel grave
Might hear, and ponder what were best and worst.
He in the midst these words with firm goodwill rehearsed :

37

" O son of Atreus, whom we call our king,
The Achaians have it in their heart this day
Thee with the scorn of all mankind to sting,
Nor heed that promise which they swore to pay,
From knight-famed Argos when they sailed away,
Troy the fair-walled to make a ruinous heap,
And bring thee homeward with a load of prey.
Now one to other on this side the deep,
Like wives bereft or children, they complain and weep.

38

" Yea, toil it is to drive men home for grief.
Even for one month if a man remain
Pent from his wife on shipboard, poor relief,
Chill comfort, can he feel in the rude strain
Of dark winds moving the tumultuous main.
But now to us runs circling the ninth year,
And still we linger. There is cause for pain,
Nor blame I that ye sicken ; yet much I fear
Empty to leave long toils but sorry guerdon were.

39

“ Bear up, my friends, abide awhile, and see,
Whether be false or true what Calchas said.
Well in our minds the word remember we :
All ye can witness, who are not yet dead.
’Tis but of yesterday, what time we sped
By seas to Aulis, Ilion to make fall,
When for the high gods the fat victims bled,
And round the altars we stood listening all,
Fast by the shining water and the plane-tree tall.

40

“ Then came a great sign : for, by Zeus upsent,
A flame-eyed serpent, all his back blood-red,
Shot from the altar, toward the plane intent,
Where eight young sparrows cowering in their bed,
Nine with the mother who the nestlings bred,
Lay in the end branch, hid with leaves ; there found
And ate the poor birds twittering in their dread,
While she, the dam, flew wailing round and round ;
Her by the wing then caught, and stilled the piteous sound.

41

“ Whom with her brood when he had eaten down,
Then God who sent him, the Olympian king,
Made him a mark, a monumental stone
For ever, and we stood there wondering.
Thus to divine rites came a monstrous thing,
Which the seer Calchas did expound, and say :
‘ Why stand ye silent ? Lo, Kronion king
Sends a late sign fulfilled in a late day,
And the wide fame thereof shall never pass away.

42

“ ‘Like as the serpent ate that brood of eight,
Nine with the mother who the nestlings bred,
So many years are we at war by fate,
And in the tenth we prosper.’ Thus he said,
And now these things are being accomplished.
Here then abide, well-greaved Achaians all,
Till Priam’s high town in the dust we tread.”
He spake: right favourably the Argives call;
Loud rang the general cheer, and the fleet shook withal.

43

Then out spake Nestor, the Gerenian knight:
“O heaven, but now like children ye debate,
Mere babes, that know not what it is to fight!
Where are the oaths? I say, let fire await
All we believed in, seeming firm as fate,
Oath, league, wine-covenant, and plighted hand,
Each loftier counsel fit for man’s estate!
Since a long time now tarrying in the land
Nought in the work we prosper, but here wrangling stand,

44

“Nay, but, O child of Atreus, as of old
Wielding an iron heart in thy firm breast,
Rush to the battle and inspire the cold,
Still be the lord and leader of the rest.
But let these wither in their shame unblest,
These one or two that dastard counsels plot,
(But never, never shall they gain their quest!)
And home to Argos would their barks have got,
Ere they discern if Zeus have spoken lies or not!

45

"For great Kronion in that hour I say
Signed us a promise, when the Argives went
First upon shipboard to come here and slay.
Then to all eyes he showed his clear intent,
When to our right the lightning-stream he sent.
Therefore let none wax faint, or tire of strife,
Nor urge return home ere the whole event,
Till each take pastime with some Trojan's wife,
And wreak the wrongs of Helen, and her groaning life.

46

"Albeit if any be so fiercely set
To go home, let him launch his well-framed bark,
Forestal the rest, and sheer destruction get.
But thou, O king, (thy way is plain, not dark),
Consult thine own mind and to others hark.
For when I speak it is no trivial plan,
Nor is the word vain which I bid thee mark :
These by their clans and houses, man to man,
Range well, that house help house, and clan may succour clan.

47

"So if according to my will thou do,
And the Achaians thy behest obey,
Soon shalt thou know the false men from the true ;
Each lord and soldier shall himself bewray,
While moving in the fight his natural way.
Then shalt thou know the very fence and bar,
What the thing is withholds thee from the prey,
Whether divine fate thy endeavours mar,
Or blundering beaten men, and sluggard hands in war."

48

Whom ending thus did Agamemnon follow :
“ Nestor, in council thou art best of men,
And O lord Zeus, Athene, and Apollo,
Would that advisers I had like him ten !
Soon would the city of Troy fall headlong then.
But Zeus is heavy upon me, and my life
Doth cast in broils, to cease I know not when ;
Yea, for a damsel there is war now rife
'Twixt me and Peleus' son—but I first kindled strife.

49

“ Come but new friendship, and our feud destroy,
Then from the evil that is fixed and sealed
Not one day's respite shall be left to Troy—
But now to dinner, ere we take the field ;
Let each his spear whet, and prepare his shield,
Feed well the horses, and each chariot test,
That we may fight it out till one side yield,
Fight in sound harness, and not think of rest,
Till the black night decide it, as to Zeus seems best.

50

“ Then shall the horses in their foam be wet,
While forward in the glittering car they strain ;
Then shall the straps of the broad buckler sweat
Round many a breast there battling in the plain ;
Then shall the arm droop, hurling spears with pain :
And whomsoever I behold at lair
Here by the ships, and for the fight not fain,
Small for that skulker is the hope, I swear,
But that the dogs he fatten and the fowls of air.”

51

Therewith he ceased ; and a broad shout uprolled,
As on a steep beach, when the south blows high,
Where clouds of foam a jutting peak enfold,
That stands out naked to all winds that fly,
Roars the great billow. Rising far and nigh
All to the huts rush, light their fires, and eat.
Each to his own god for himself doth cry,
With sacred gifts. A steer the king thought meet,
Fat, large, and five years old, Kronion to entreat.

52

Thereto the chief lords of the Achaian race
He called, first Nestor, then Idomeneus,
Each Aias, Diomedes, and sixth in place
Odysseus, gifted with a mind like Zeus.
Still faithful Menelaüs in war and truce
Came of himself : his brother-heart well knew
What labour was afoot, what scheme in use.
Soon on the victim the white meal they threw,
And there the imperial chief prayed loudly in their view :

53

" O cloud-wrapt Zeus, all-glorious lord of heaven,
Let not the sun fall and the night descend,
Till the scared Trojans in full rout be driven,
And on their city light a ruinous end,
Till sword and fire within their gates I send,
And rip with brass the mail of Hector's breast,
That earth he bite, and with him many a friend."
Thus prayed he : nor the Sire fulfilled his quest,
But took the gifts, and gave more sorrow and more unrest.

54

Then they the head draw backward, kill, and flay
The victim, and enfold each goodly thigh
With coils of fat, raw pieces overlay,
And burn them down with leafless logs and dry;
Then spit the entrails o'er the flame on high,
Which, when the thighs are quite consumed, they taste,
Then cut the rest small, and their work still ply
Till all is roasted and the banquet placed;
Then drink and eat, none there with generous food ungraced.

55

But soon as their desire was quenched and gone,
Then out spake Nestor, the Gerenian knight:
" Imperial Agamemnon, Atreus' son,
No more delay we; let us do with might
What God deals out to be fulfilled ere night.
Come, let the heralds of the camp go round,
And their clear summons by the fleet indite.
But we, here met, will pace the embattled ground,
Stirring men's hearts, and soon wild battle shall resound."

56

He spake; nor Agamemnon, king of men,
Did to the old man's counsel not obey,
But to the shrill-voiced heralds there and then
Gave his commandment to proclaim the fray.
Soon came the wide host flocking every way.
And the divine kings, rushing here and there,
Order the long ranks and the tumult sway.
Came too Athene, and that ægis rare,
Proof against years, immortal, in their midst did wear.

57

Tassels a hundred, all of gold, adorn
That glorious ægis : each is twisted well,
Each worth a hundred kine, sleek, fair of horn.
She, clad therein, with lightning glances fell,
Moves in the midst, each loiterer to impel,
Till the high fury in all breasts doth burn,
Ne'er to bate fighting till the foe they quell,
And war seems doubly sweeter than return
Home to the far dear country whereunto they yearn.

58

As when the seed of fire, uncertain whence,
Falls on a forest in some windy height,
And from afar is seen the glare immense,
So to the welkin, as they marched in might,
Burned the divine brass with a wondrous light.
And as a flush of birds, swan, goose, or crane,
Wheeling from heaven in all the joys of flight,
By stream Cayster in the Asian plain,
Clangs o'er the meadowy marge, and the air rings again,—

59

So from the huts a flush of men there came,
And from the black ships. In a flood they pour
Down to the field beside Scamander stream,
And earth, by reason of the tramp she bore,
Shook from beneath them a low thunderous roar,
Such was the march of men and steeds to hear.
Anon they halt on the Scamandrian shore,
That plain of flowers, and thick as leaves appear,
Or stars of blossoming buds in season of the year.

60

Or like a swarm innumerable of flies,
That some fair homestead doth in spring frequent,
When o'er the pails the foamy milk doth rise,
So swarming in the plain the Achaians went,
Fierce for the crash, on utter war intent.
And as when goatherds part their goats at will,
Mixed on the mountain, where they browsed unpent,
So did the leaders part their ranks, until
All for the fight stood firm, and full of rage to kill.

61

There in the midst rose towering o'er the rest,
Like thunder-loving Zeus in eyes and face,
With zone like Ares, and Poseidon's breast,
Lord Agamemnon, chief in strength and grace.
As when a great bull, goodliest of his race,
Moves far aloft amid the gathering kine,
So excellent he towers in pride of place,
Thus Agamemnon by the gift divine
Chiefest among ten thousand on that day did shine.

62

Say, Muses, ye that in Olympus dwell,
(Divinities ye are, and all behold,
We but hear rumour, nothing sure can tell),
Who were the kings and Danaan leaders bold.
But the mass following could I ne'er unfold,
Though ten tongues had I and ten mouths in use,
Unweariable in voice and brazen-souled,
Save the Olympian Muses, seed of Zeus,
Show me the names that came proud Ilion to reduce.

63

Peneleus, Prothoënor, Leïtus,
(These are the captains and the ships they led),
Arcesilaüs, and brave Clonius,
Mid their Bœotian followers ranked as head.
From Hyria they and rocky Aulis sped,
From Schoinos, Eteonus' woodland knees,
From Scolos, Graia, and the plain outspread
Of Mycalessus, Thisbè near the seas,
Where the divine doves haunt the Heliconian trees;

64

From Coronea, Haliartus green,
Glisas, Plataea, Hypothebæ fair,
Onchestus, where Poseidon's grove is seen,
And Arnè's soil, which loaden vines doth bear,
Plesius, Nisa to the gods a care,
Mideia, and Anthedon, frontier town—
From these did swift ships to the war repair,
Fifty by tale; and youths of high renown,
Bœotian men, six score, in every ship came down.

65

But troops of Minyan town Orchomenus,
And who the dwellers in Aspledon be,
Ascalaphus and brave Ialmenus
Led, whom in Actor's house Astyoche
Bare, in an upper chamber secretly
Mixing with Ares, when the virgin band
He loosened—thirty were their ships on sea.
But Schedius and Epistrophus command
(Iphitus' sons) the soldiers of the Phocian land.

66

In Cyparissus, rocky Python, these,
Crisa divine and Anemoria dwell,
In Daulis, Panopeus, Hyampolis,
Or of thy streams, divine Cephisus, tell,
And fair Lilaia at thy fountain-well ;
These were led sailing o'er the barren flood,
In black ships forty, Priam's town to quell,
By children of Iphitus, warriors good.
Hard on Boëotia's files, to leftward, the troops stood.

67

Aias the Locrians led, Oileus' son,
Not he to Telamonian Aias peer,
Less far in strength and stature, and had on
Corselet of linen, but in craft of spear
All men excelled. And these of Cynos were,
Opus, and Bessa, and the Augeian vale,
Scarphe, Calliarus, and Thronius near
Boagrian stream. And he led forty sail
From past divine Eubœia. Such the Locrian tale.

68

Next, the Abantes in Eubœia dwell,
In Cerinth, Histiaëa clad with vine,
Chalcis, Eretria, Dios' citadel,
Styra, Carystus. Chief of these did shine,
To Ares born, of Chalcodontian line,
Brave Elephenor. With their hearts aflame,
With long hair streaming, and through breast and spine
Eager to thrust, his spearmen-warriors came.
And forty were the ships of the Eubœian name.

69

Next who in Athens, well-built fortress, dwell,
Land of the brave Erechtheus, whom of old
Daughter of Zeus Athene nurtured well;
(Him liberal Earth did from her womb unfold.)
In Athens, in her temple rich with gold
She placed him. Ever as the years go round,
To heaven a sacrificial steam is rolled
Of rams and fat bulls, from the sacred ground,
While the Athenian youths her praise and his resound.

70

Their captain was Menestheus, Petaüs' seed,
Nor in the earth was any found more sage
Horses and men to set in line at need,
When the poised battle they were met to gage.
Nestor alone, by reason of his age,
Might stand his rival. Fifty barks, I wis,
Sailed in his wake, the Ilian feud to wage.
These were of Athens, and their captain this.
Also did Aias lead twelve ships from Salamis.

71

Next, men from Argos and Tirynthian hold,
From Troezen, Epidaurus, Asinè,
Hermionè (these twain the gulf enfold),
And who of Mases and Ægina be,
With Diomedes, a good rescuer he,
Followed with eighty ships, commanded thus :
Far-shouting Diomedes, first of three,
Then, child of Capaneus, high Sthenelus,
And king Mekistes' son, godlike Euryalus.

72

And next who in Mycenæ's citadel,
Rich Corinth, and Cleonæ builded fair,
Ornæ, and lovely Aræthyrea dwell,
Pellenè, Hyperesia, Sicyon, where
Adrastus reigned, and who the coast-land share—
These, far the most and best, a hundred sail,
With Agamemnon, son of Atreus, were.
He mid the heroes in his glittering mail
Moved goodliest far in mien, and glorying to prevail.

73

And who from hollow Lacedæmon be,
Pharis and Sparta, Augæ's lovely land,
Dove-haunted Messa, Helos near the sea,
Læïs, Amyclæ, to the Ilian strand
Did Menelaüs, Atreus' son, command.
Sixty their ships, and they no warriors weak.
He fierce in valour, where aloof they stand,
Cheers them to war. He most did yearning seek
Wrongs of the high-born Helen, and her groans, to wreak

74

And next came Nestor, the Gerenian lord,
Who from afar did ninety ships command,
From Pteleüs, Thryos, the Alphéan ford,
From Pylos and Arenè lovely land,
Moist Helos, and the Cyparissian strand,
And Dorion, where the Muses a strange thing
Wrought, and met coming from Œchalian land,
Even from Eurytus, Œchalian king,
Bard Thamyris of Thrace, and made him cease to sing.

75

For he set up to put forth boasts, and send
High vaunt and challenge of the victor's meed,
Yea, though the Muses should in song contend,
Muses of ægis-bearing Zeus the seed.
So they in anger a dread thing decreed,
Maimed him for ever, and avenged the wrong,
And from their presence sent him poor indeed,
And robbed of the divinity of song,
And caused him to forget the harp he loved so long.

76

And who Arcadia 'neath Cyllenè's height
Inhabit, by the tomb of Æpytus,
Land full of hills, where hand to hand they fight;
Of Rhipè, Stratia, and Pheneüs,
Windy Enispè, green Orchomenus,
Stymphalus, Mantinea, Tegea. These
With Agapenor, sixty sail, came thus :
Their ships were Agamemnon's, for the seas
They knew not, nor that trade, but they could fight with ease.

77

And they of Elis the divine, what space,
On from Hyrminè and far Myrsinus,
Aleisium and the Olenian rock embrace.
Four were their captains, each with ten ships thus :
First were Amphimachus and Thalpius,
This born to Eurytus Actorion,
The other was the child of Cteatus ;
Then came Diores, Amarynceus' son ;
And godlike the fourth fleet Polyxenus led on.

78

Also the men that from Dulichium be,
And from the sacred isles, Echinades,
That over against Elis out at sea
Rise ; and the captain that commanded these,
Equal to Ares, when the strife he sees,
Was Meges, son to Phyleus, valiant knight,
Friend of high Zeus. Him did his sire displease,
And off he went, and on Dulichium height
Dwelt. Forty sail him followed to the Ilian fight.

79

Odysseus led the Cephallenians brave.
In land of rock-bound Ithaca they dwell,
And the hill Neritus where forests wave,
Samè, and green Zacynthus' woodland swell,
And the rough country that scarce feedeth well
Even the goats, and all the mainland steep.
These to the rule of wise Odysseus fell,
Who in his breast did godlike counsels keep.
Twelve vermeil-painted ships him followed o'er the deep.

80

Thoas the Ætolians led, Andræmon's son ;—
They Olenus, Pylènè, Pleuron hold,
Surf-beaten Chalcis, rocky Calydon—
For to large-hearted Ceneus, warrior old,
Were sons no more, and his own days were told,
And auburn Meleager too was dead.
Now therefore Thoas all the race controlled
In wide Ætolia, and was called their head.
And to the land of Troia forty sail he led.

81

Idomeneus the Cretans led with might.
These Cnosus hold, and Gortyn's walled retreat,
Miletus, and Lucastus hill, chalk-white,
Lyctus and Rhytium, each a well-built seat,
And the whole land of hundred-citied Crete.
Spear-famed Idomeneus was lord of these,
And, not unequal in fair strife to meet
Ares himself, the godlike Mériones.
And eighty ships with them sailed over the wide seas.

82

Also Tlepolemus the Heracleid
Nine ships of warlike Rhodians, men of might,
Led : through the isle in three parts they divide,
Lind, Ialysus, and Cameirus white.
O'er these Tlepolemus held chieftain's right,
Born of Astyochè to Heracles,
Who from Selleïs river by dint of fight
Gained her, from Ephyra beyond the seas,
When many towns he sacked, and lordly sovereignties.

83

But now to manhood grown, Tlepolemus
Straight a near kinsman of his father slew,
That branch of Ares, old Licymnius,
Anon ships builded, and much people drew,
And o'er the seas fled wandering ; for he knew
The cry for blood was on his father's race.
So he to Rhodes came suffering with his crew,
There three tribes planted, and with Zeus found grace,
Who vast wealth rained upon them, and set firm their place.

84

Nireus from Symè led a fleet of three,
Nireus, Aglaïa's offspring, whom she bare
In Symè girdled by the Carian sea,
Nireus in beauty, of all Danaans there,
Achilleus only except, the far most fair,
But poor in prowess, and his following few.
Antiphus and Pheidippus chieftains were
Of Cos and the isles : of Thessalus they two
Were sons ; and thirty sail their rank of retinue.

85

Those next, who from Pelasgian Argos were,
Who Alos, Alopè, and Trachis hold,
Phthia, and Hellas famed for women fair,
Achaïans, Myrmidons, Hellenes bold.
Fifty their ships were, and the host controlled
By valiant chief Achilleus, Peleus' son.
But they no longer the grim shout uprolled,
And thunderings of the war remembered none,
For there was no man left their phalanx to lead on.

86

For all the while Achilleus, noble chief,
Far in the fleet aloof from all men lay,
Still grieving in his soul a bitter grief
For fair Briseïs, whom he bore away
From out Lyrnesus, after perilous play,
When Thebè and Lyrnesus down he cast,
And Mynes and Epistrophus did slay,
Sons of Evenus. Held in anguish fast
He lay there, to rise up more terrible at the last.

87

From Iton, mother of sheep, and Phylacè,
And flowery Pyrasus, Demeter's shrine,
Green-swarded Pteleüs, Antron by the sea,
Came brave Protesilaüs, chief divine,
Ere Fate to the dark earth did him consign,
Leaving a house half-built, and his bride
In Phylacè to rend her cheeks and pine.
He by a Dardan spear, the ships beside,
Leaping far first to land of all the Achaians, died.

88

Chiefless they were not, though a chief they mourn.
Them to the battle strong Podarkes led,
That branch of Ares, to Iphiclus born,
And mid the green of upland pastures bred,
The noble brother of the nobler dead.
Protesilaüs was the elder son
And better : but not meanly were they led,
Albeit in sorrow for a good man gone.
And forty black ships following after him came on.

89

Next who of Pheræ, near Boibeïs lake,
Of Boibè, Glaphyræ, Iolcos fair,
Them did Admetus' son Eumelus take,
Eleven ships. Him divine Alcestis bare,
Of Pelias' daughters most in beauty rare.
But who Methonè, Meliboia, hold,
Thaumacia, rough Olizon, followers were
Of Philoctetes, errless archer bold,
Seven ships : and fifty archers were of each enrolled.

90

He sore afflicted now in Lemnos lay,
Smit with bad ulcer from a venomous snake,
Alone, for the Achaians on their way
Had left him. Soon was memory yet to wake
Of Argive men for Philoctetes' sake.
Nor of a leader were they now forlorn ;
Commandment of their ranks did Medon take,
Medon the bastard, to Oïleus born
Of Rhena ; he their chief, albeit a chief they mourn.

91

And who in Tricca and Ithomè dwell,
And in Œchalia, realm of Eurytus,
The Asclepian brothers, knowing leech-craft well,
Command, Machaon, Podalirius,
With thirty sail. And who Ormenius,
Fount Hypereia, Titanus' white hill,
Hold, and Asterium, these Eurypylus,
Renowned son of Euæmon, ranged at will ;
And forty swift black ships his retinue fulfil.

92

And who Argissa and Gyrtonè hold,
Orthè, Elona, Oloösson white,
These were the arm of Polypoites bold,
Son to Peirithous, on the self-same night
Born when the hairy Centaurs in fierce fight
He punished, and from Pelion thrusting drave.
Nor ruled he single, but in equal might
Joined with Leonteus, of Coronus brave
The son : and forty ships came with them o'er the wave.

93

Gouneus from Cyphos twenty ships and two
Led, the hard race that round Dodona dwell,
And where the streams of Titaresius flow,
Nor mingle with the silver-eddy swelling
Of fair Peneüs, but run smoothly well
Like oil above him, for the water springs
From the oath-inviolable Styx. And they who dwell,
Magnesian race, on Pelion's leaf-clad wings,
These to the war, ships forty, the swift Prothoüs brings.

94

These were the leaders of the Danaan host.
But, O Muse, tell me which the best were seen,
Men and their horses, on the Ilian coast.
Far were the best Eumelus' steeds, I ween,
Fleeter than birds, in pace, bone, colour, and mien
Matched to a hair, and level length of spine ;
Both mares, and in Pierian pastures green
Reared by Apollo ; through the trampled line
Driving dismay before them, and alarm divine.

95

And of Achaian men the best by far
Was Telamonian Aias, while abode
Achilleus in his anger shut from war.
He in renown of virtue all outshowed,
In horses, and the car wherein he rode,
Achilleus, the fleet warrior, void of blame ;
Who now, tormented by wrath's fiery goad,
In ships lay cursing Agamemnon's name,
While in his breast of battle the stern memory came.

96

Now all his people on the barren beach
With arrow, disk, and javelin pastime heed ;
While unyoked horses, near his chariot each,
On fresh green lotus and marsh-parsley feed.
But in the huts lie waiting against need
The chariots of the captains, wrapt with care.
They without heart, and with no ranks to lead,
Mourn their still-tarrying chief, to Ares dear,
And loiter about the army, and go here and there.

97

Fast came the tramp of many thousand feet,
As the whole land were eaten up by fire.
And the earth bellowed to their iron beat,
As when Zeus thunders from the heaven in ire,
And lashes the loud hills with lightnings dire
In Arimi, round Typhon : for 'tis said
Typhon there lies on ever-smouldering pyre.
Thus earth groaned heavily beneath their tread,
As they devoured the plain, and mightily onward sped.

98

But Zeus the while wind-footed Iris sent
Down into Troy, the heavy news to break.
They, young and old, at Priam's doors intent
Held council. In Polites' voice she spake ;
Who without terror, for his fleetness' sake,
On tomb of Æsyetes sat, their spy,
Expecting when the Achaian men should make
Their onslaught from the ships, that he might fly
With tidings. She, like him, spake pale and hurryingly :

99

"Old man, thy words, as in the calm days gone,
Mean nothing : there are bloodier things in hand.
Wars have I seen, yet never a host known
Like this : innumerable as leaves or sand
The plain they cover. O Hector, I demand
Help of thee most. In Priam's town abide
Tongues not a few, strange nations in the land.
Let each for his own troop their sign decide,
Each lead his own men forward, and their ranks divide."

100

She spake ; nor Hector other word awaits,
But ends the council ; and to arms they pour.
Out rush the people by the open gates,
Horsemen and footmen ; and a great wide roar
Fills earth and heaven. The city-walls before,
Stands from the plain a lone hill, tall and round.
Name among men 'the hill of thorns' it bore,
But the gods call it fleet Myrina's mound.
There in array full soon the Trojan troops were found.

101

Hector, the white-plumed warrior, Priam's son,
The Trojans led : with him the most and best,
Spear-armed, and yearning for the strife, came on.
Æneas to the Dardans gave behest,
Anchises' son, but nurtured on the breast
Of Aphrodite : with Anchises she,
Divine with human, 'neath the sylvan crest
Of Ida mingled : not alone came he ;
Handled the host with him two chiefs in company.

102

These of Antenor were the noble seed,
Archelochus and Acamas by name,
Well seen in arms, and high in valiant deed.
And from the uttermost feet of Ida came
A rich tribe, drinkers of Æsapus stream,
Men of Seleia, kin with Troy by race.
O'er these a leader of illustrious fame,
Son of Lycaon, Pandarus, held chief place,
Whom lord Apollo himself with archer's arms did grace.

103

And who Apæsus and Adrastia hold,
Pityian soil, and Teræ's lofty head,
These were commanded by Adrastus bold,
And by Amphius linen-corseleted,
Sons of that Merops, above all men read
In the art of divination, a great seer,
Who bade them oft devouring war to dread,
Neither to go forth ; but they would not hear,
For the black Death-fates ruled more mightily than their fear.

104

And who Percotè hold and Practius,
Sestos, Abydos, and Arisba fair,
These followed Asius, son of Hyrtacus,
Whom from Selleïs, stream Arisbian, bare
Large horses, fiery-eyed, and fleet as air.
Hippothonus the Pelasgian spearmen led,
Who from Larissa's fruitful land repair,
Hippothonus, and Pylæus, warrior dread,
Sons of Teutamian Lethus, the Pelasgian head.

105

From the Hellespontian flood the Thracians led
The hero Peirōüs and Acamas.
Of the Ciconians was Euphemus head,
Born to divine Trœzenus, son of Kâs.
Pyraichmes chief of the Pæonians was,
Archers from Amydon, by Axius stream,
Whose water doth all waters far surpass.
And Paphlagonians with Pylæmen came,
From Heneti, whose breed of mules can no man tame.

106

They from the country of Cytorus be,
Homes of a wide renown inhabiting
Around Parthenius river, and by the sea,
Where the coast hills of Erythini spring.
And Odius, with Epistrophus, was king
Of the Halizonians: from afar they were,
From Alyba, whence silver ore they bring.
And men of Mysia, warlike with the spear,
Chromis commanded well, and Ennomus the seer.

107

Augur he was, but no augurial ken
Could to his profit against Fate avail,
Or the black doom that falleth upon men
Ward, when Achilleus caused his life to fail
There in the river, when much furious bale
He mid the Trojans and all else did throw.
And fair Ascanius, like a god in mail,
And Phorcys, from Ascania's inland flow,
The Phrygians led, much yearning to assault the foe.

108

Also were Antiphus and Mesthles head,
Talæmen's sons, from Lake Gygæa sprung,
Of the Mæonians under Tmolus bred.
Nastes the Carians of outlandish tongue
Commanded, who, the infinite leaves among,
Dwell near Miletus, in the mount of Pine,
Where flowings of Mæander, not unsung,
Wind through the vale, and o'er the mountain line
Lifts up her towering heads great Mycalè divine.

109

These did Amphimachus and Nastes lead,
Two brethren, heirs of an illustrious name,
Nastes, Amphimachus, Nomion's seed.
He, like a girl, with gold to battle came,
Nor could it save him from defeat and shame.
Him by the river fleet Achilleus slew,
And to his gold, the prize of war, laid claim.
From whirling Xanthus, of the Lycian crew
Glaucus and brave Sarpedon were the chieftains two.

B O O K I I I.

1

THUS were they marshalled ; and with clangs and cries
Forward like birds the Trojans hurrying beat,
As with a clang wild cranes along the skies
From winter and the unutterable sleet
Fly over ocean-streams, hastening to meet
That tribe of Pygmies, doom and death to bear,
When in the morning they their enemy greet.
But silently the Achaïans onward fare,
Breathing disdain and anger, with one heart to dare.

2

Like on the hills a mist, to shepherd men
Not kind, but to the thief more good than night,
When space beyond a stone's throw none may ken,
So was the dust-cloud as they marched to fight.
When they were met together in full sight,
Stept godlike Alexander from the rest,
With broadsword, bow, and leopard's skin bedight,
Shaking two spears, and all the Argive best
Called with high voice, and dared them to the terrible test.

3

Him Menelaus when he marked that way
Proud with long strides before the host appear,
Joyed like a lion who hath found a prey,
A great prey in his hunger, goat or deer,
Nor will he let go, but devours it sheer,
Though fleet dogs worry him, and the men press round.
So, with the godlike Alexander near,
Joyed Menelaus, thinking vengeance found,
And from his chariot straight, in arms, leapt to the ground.

4

Him when the godlike Alexander knew
Dropt suddenly in the van, with craven heart
Back to his friends, avoiding fate, he drew.
As haply, in the mountain glens apart,
One seeth a gaunt snake, and doth backward start,
And his limbs shiver, and his cheek turns pale,
And trembling he is gone, fleet as a dart :
So from the child of Atreus, bright with mail,
Slunk godlike Alexander, and did huddling quail.

5

Hector then marked him, and upbraiding cried :
“ Beautiful, evil Paris, woman-mad,
Unborn I wish thee, or unwed to have died,
False-hearted trifer, than behold thee clad
Thus with ineffable shame, and scornings bad.
Now the long-haired Achaians verily laugh,
Who took for a fine champion one that had
Such beauty ; but thy spirit is weak as chaff,
Piercing the hand that trusts thee like a treacherous staff.

6

" Was it for this, or with such heart as now,
O'er the wide billows with a chosen band
Thou sailedst, and with violated vow
Didst bring thy fair wife from the Apian strand,
Torn from the house of men of warlike hand,
And a great sorrow for thy father's head,
Troy town, and all the people of the land,
By thine inhospitable offence hast bred,
Thus for the enemy's sport, thine own confusion dread ?

7

" Lo, now thou cowerest, and wilt not abide
Fierce Menelaus—thou hadst known, I ween,
Soon of what man thou hast the blooming bride !
Poor had the profit of thy harp then been,
Vain Aphrodite's gifts, thy hair, thy mien,
He mangling in the dust thy fallen brow.
But there is no wrong to the Trojans keen,
And they are lambs in spirit ; or else hadst thou
Worn, for thine evil works, a cloke of stone ere now."

8

And godlike Alexander answering said :
" Hector, I yield me : for thine own heart rings
Harder than iron by some shipwright sped
Clean through the timber, when his great strength springs
Fresh to each stroke, so well the axe he swings :
Such breast is thine. Nor thou upbraid me yet
With golden Aphrodite's lovely things.
The gods' high gifts may not at nought be set,
Which freely they bestow, nor we by wishing get.

9

"But now, if thou wilt have me rise and fight,
Bid here the Trojans and Achaïans sit,
While I and Menelaüs in open sight
For Helen and her wealth try judgment fit;
And who prevails, and shall him best acquit,
Let wife and goods be given into his hand,
And all the rest, in sacred friendship knit,
Homeward return, we living in our land,
They sailing back to Argos and the Achaïan strand."

10

He ceased, and Hector with a joy divine
Heard what he said, and grasping his mid spear
Moved down the front, and stayed the Trojan line.
But the long-haired Achaïans on him there
Flung stones, and half-drawn arrows aiming were;
But loud imperial Agamemnon cried:
"Stay, sons of Argos, hit him not, but hear!
For white-plumed Hector would some word confide."
Then were they stilled, and he spake forth to either side:

11

"Hear, Trojans, and well-greaved Achaïans hear!
Lo, Alexander, for whose sake we fight,
Now bids you all at last, in the tenth year,
Lay down your arms, and thus decide the right:
Himself and Menelaüs in open sight
For Helen and her wealth shall singly stand,
And who prevailleth and is best in might,
Let wife and goods be given into his hand,
But we the rest plight troth, enjoying each our land."

12

So did he speak, and all were hushed and still,
But warrior Menelaus answering spake :
“ Hear also me : for most the sword of ill
Cuts *me* to the soul : such anguish for my sake
Ye bear, such woes did Alexander make.
The hour is come that ye depart in peace,
Argives and Trojans, and this long war break.
Therefore of us twain let the life now cease
To whom Fate wills, and ye, the rest, win quick release.

13

“ Two lambs for Earth and Sun, a male and ewe,
This black, that white, shall ye the Trojans bring ;
We then a third, to Zeus the offering due.
Call too the majesty of Priam king
Himself to ratify each sacred thing,
(Fierce are his sons, and breakers of true plight),
That none transgress : since ever on the wing
Stray young men’s thoughts ; when they the old invite,
He sees before and after, and trains all things right.”

14

Thus spake he, and both sides the promise charms
With hope to leave off war. The steeds they rein
Down the long ranks, dismount, and pile their arms,
Each at small interval, along the plain.
Then Hector for the lambs sent heralds twain,
And bade them call great Priam : Atreus’ son
Talthybius to the fleet beside the main
Sent for a lamb, to have the rites begun ;
And he went forth, nor left the king’s command undone.

15

Iris to white-armed Helen now took wing,
Like Paris' sister, Helicaon's bride,
Fairest of all the daughters of the king,
Laodicè. And Helen she espied
Weaving a two-fold purple robe, beside
The great loom in the hall ; therein she planned
Labours of war, and sufferings far and wide
For her sake undergone at Ares' hand.
And near her, with these words, did swift-foot Iris stand :

16

" O come, dear bride, and see the works divine
Of Trojans and Achaians, who of yore
Tasted much toil, and drank the bitter wine
Of strugglings in the plain, contention sore.
Now silently they sit, the conflict o'er,
Propt on their shields, the tall spears planted nigh.
Soon Alexander, in the space before,
And Menelaus single combat try ;
And he that wins will gain thee for his wife thereby."

17

Thus having said, the goddess on her mind
Poured a sweet memory of the former things,
Husband, and native city, and parents kind.
She in a moment round her shoulders flings
Robe of white lawn, and from the threshold springs,
Yearning and pale, with many a tender tear.
Also two women in her train she brings,
The large-eyed Clymenè and Æthra fair.
And at the western gates right speedily they were.

18

There Priam, Panthoüs, Lampus, and their train,
Thymoetes, Clytius, Hiketaon sat,
Ucalegon, Antenor, wise of brain,
Hard by the gates, and council held thereat ;
Loosed by old age from war, but in debate
Most admirable, and with the voice endued
Of clear cicalas that in summer heat
Thrill with a silver tune the shady wood.
Such sat the Trojan elders, each in thoughtful mood.

19

These seeing Helen at the tower arrive,
One to another wingèd words addressed :
“ Well may the Trojans and Achaians strive,
And a long time bear sorrow and unrest,
For such a woman, in her cause and quest,
Who like immortal goddesses in face
Appeareth ; yet 'twere even thus far best
In ships to send her back to her own place,
Lest a long curse she leave to us and all our race.”

20

Then Priam called her : “ Sit near me, dear child,
And thy once husband, kindred, friends survey.
Thee hold I guiltless, but the gods, less mild,
Scourge me with war when I am old and grey.
Now tell me this large warrior's name, I pray,
This so majestic in his port and mien ;
Others yet taller I behold to-day,
But none till now so beautiful, I ween,
So estimable and grave, so king-like, have I seen.”

21

Helen, divine of women, answering saith :
" Father, thy grey hairs speak with awful power.
O that for dear life I had chosen death,
When with thy son I left my bridal bower,
My child, and sweet companions ! but the hour
Passed, and I wail for ever ! Thou dost see
Lord Agamemnon, Atreus' son, the flower
Of kings, and a strong warrior. This is he
That was my husband's brother, unless I dream, ah me !"

22

Him then the old man much admired, and said :
" Blest son of Atreus, born with happy star,
O, of how many Achaians art thou head !
Once that vine-country where the Phrygians are,
Numberless men, with steeds and glancing car,
By Otreus and high Mygdon ruled, I knew.
Hard by Sangarius stream encamped for war,
When came the Amazons, my help they drew :
But than these dark-eyed warriors they were far more few."

23

Seeing Odysseus then, the old man said :
" Him too describe, dear child, at my behest,
Less tall than Agamemnon by the head,
But in the shoulders wider, and the breast.
His arms upon the boon earth glittering rest,
As mid the ranks he moveth to and fro.
Him to a thick-fleeced ram I liken best,
Passing amid a great flock white as snow."
And Helen, child of Zeus, this answer did bestow :

24

"Odysseus is the man, Laertes' son,
Wise, and in Ithaca's rough country bred,
All arts to whom and deep designs are known."
Thereto the wise Antenor answering said :
"Lady, a true word from thy lips hath fled.
Here also hath divine Odysseus been.
He came with Menelaus, warrior dread,
To hear of thee : they were my guests, I ween,
Who the whole cast of both, and inmost mind, have seen.

25

"When in the Trojan council they appeared,
Each standing, Menelaus overpassed
His friend in stature upward from the beard.
Of the more honourable and graver cast
Odysseus seemed, both sitting. When at last
For speech the arrows of keen thought they strung,
Then Menelaus spoke with utterance fast,
In brief sort, chary of words, but clear of tongue,
Not wandering from the point, albeit in age more young.

26

"But from his seat when wise Odysseus sprang,
Firming his eyes upon the ground he stood,
Nor waved his sceptre through the whole harangue,
But clenched it, like a man sullen and rude,
As 'twere a boor or one in angry mood.
But when the volume of his voice he rolled
In words like snow-flakes, winter's feathery brood,
None could Odysseus rival, young or old ;
All cared to hear him now far more than to behold."

27

Aias beholding third, the old man said :
" Who is this other, far most tall and wide ?"
Helen, divine of women, answering said :
" Aias, the tower of war ; and on that side
Stands, girt with captains, godlike in his pride
Idomeneus of Crete. He oft of old
Did in my husband's home, our guest, abide.
But now all other Achaians I behold,
All of them know right well, and can their names unfold.

28

" Only two captains can I nowhere see,
Knight Castor, Pollux of the iron glove,
Own brethren, of one mother born with me.
Came they not hither from the land we love ?
Or, if they sailed the briny deeps above,
Dare they not enter on the field with men,
For taunts and insult, which my name doth move ?"
She spake—but them kind earth, far from her ken,
In Lacedæmon held, their dear land, even then.

29

Meantime the heralds bear the holy things,
Two lambs, and wine that maketh noble cheer,
Stored in a goatskin ; and Idæus brings
The glittering bowl, and golden cups. He, near
The old man standing, bade him mark and hear :
" Son of Laomedon, with speed arise !
For now Troy's best desire thee to appear,
And Argives brazen-mailed, before their eyes,
To strike truce in the plain with prayer and sacrifice.

30

“ Since Alexander, for whose sake we fight,
Bids now the Trojans and Achaïans sit,
While he and Menelaüs in open sight
For Helen and her wealth try judgment fit :
And who prevails, and shall him best acquit,
Both wife and goods are given into his hand ;
And all the rest, in sacred friendship knit,
Homeward return, we living in our land,
They sailing back to Argos and the Achaian strand.”

31

He ended, and the old man, when he heard,
Shuddered in soul, and turning to his train
Bade yoke the steeds ; and they obeyed his word.
Then up went Priam, and drew back the rein,
Antenor at his side ; then toward the plain
Held the swift horses through the western gate.
When they the lines of either host attain,
Dismounting from the car they stand in state,
While on the fruitful earth both armies round them wait.

32

Then rose up Agamemnon, king of men,
And wise Odysseus ; all the holy things
Heralds convey, and in the bowl mix then
Wine, and bear lustral water to the kings.
Then Agamemnon draws the knife that swings
Under the great sword's scabbard, and cuts hair
From each lamb's forehead ; and a herald brings
Part so cut off to every chieftain there.
Loud cries the son of Atreus, lifting hands of prayer :

33

“ Ruling from Ida, thy great sanctuary,
Zeus Father, the All-highest, and thou Sun,
Who all dost overhear and oversee,
And Earth, and Rivers, and ye sparing none,
In the dead land, that leave an oath undone,
Stand witness now, true covenant guard and keep !
By Alexander if this fight be won,
His be fair Helen and her wealth to reap,
And we will homeward sail beyond the barren deep.

34

“ Also, if Menelaus win the day,
Troy must fair Helen and her wealth restore,
And fit price to the men of Argos pay
In testimony hereof for evermore.
But if king Priam and his sons abhor
Due price to yield, should Alexander die,
Then will I fight on, as I fought before,
Here tarrying till the bitter end I try,
And for old crime exact the utmost penalty.”

35

Then in the victim's throats the steel he thrust,
Who, for the iron reft away their soul,
Sank void of strength, and gasping in the dust.
They, in the cups wine pouring from the bowl,
Prayer to the everlasting gods uproll :
“ O Zeus, all-glorious, and each god in heaven,
Now like this wine, to whoso keep not whole
Our oath, the brain pour earthward, and be riven
Life from their children dear, their wives to strangers given !”

36

So prayed they a vain prayer. Then Priam cries :
" Hear, Trojans and Achaians : I will go
Back into Troy : I cannot with these eyes
Dare to behold the blood that now must flow.
Zeus only and the gods eternal know
Whether of these is fated to be slain."
He spake, and on the chariot mounted so,
Then, waiting for Antenor, drew the rein,
And back to Troy they galloped o'er the echoing plain.

37

But Hector and divine Odysseus there
Mete out the lists, and in a helmet shake
Lots, whether of the twain first hurl his spear.
All hands uplifted, thus in prayer they spake :
" Zeus Father, the All-highest, who dost make
From Ida thy voice heard, let him that wrought
These wrongs, and caused so many hearts to break,
Dead to the house of Hades now be brought,
And unto us give friendship, by a firm oath bought."

38

So they ; but Hector the bright helmet shook,
Turning his eyes back, and the lot forth leapt
Of Paris. They their seats in order took,
Each where his steeds and glittering arms he kept.
Then godlike Alexander forward stept,
Husband of bright-haired Helen, and arrayed
In arms, that never in dim rust had slept,
His glorious form ; fair greaves about him laid
First, that with silver clasps shone beautifully made ;

39

Then round his breast the gleaming cuirass drew,
Lycaon's, his dear brother, and made it fast,
Not less to him than to its owner true ;
Over his shoulders the great sword then cast,
And the man-covering shield, heavy and vast ;
Laced the fair helmet on his stately head,
Terribly waving the white crest ; and last
Lifted the long spear, to his palm close wed.
So also Menelaus put on armour dread.

40

So when on both sides they are armed well,
Forward into the middle space they draw,
With eyes inevitable and aspect fell.
And a great wonder came with speechless awe
On Trojans and Achaians when they saw.
Each near the other, the fair lists within,
Which the divine chiefs meted out by law,
Stood brandishing his spear, in hope to win,
Each with the other enraged, and eager to begin.

41

First the long javelin Alexander hurled,
And hit the round shield of his foe, nor made
Breach in the metal, but the hard point curled
Back from the shield, nor could the brass invade.
Then Menelaus shook his spear, and prayed :
"Avenge me of my wrongs, Zeus, king sublime,
That Alexander go not hence unpaid !
So shall guests tremble in the after-time
Against one kind to strangers to lift hands of crime."

42

Thus prayed he, and anon with forward bound
Hurled from its quivering poise the shafted spear,
And hit the shield of Paris, broad and round.
Through the bright metal clave a pathway sheer
The strong lance, driven in fury, and cut clear
The breastplate and the glittering work thereon,
Till that it rent the tunic, and came near
Even to the flank : but Priam's godlike son,
Swerving aside, made shift the bitter death to shun.

43

Then Menelaus at full height upbore
His sword, and the helm smote ; but round him there
His steel fell shivered in three parts and four.
Loud groaned he, gazing up the spacious air :
" Zeus Father, of all gods chief bale and snare,
Surely I thought that I should vengeance know
On the false adversary : ah, fruitless prayer !
The sword is broken in my hand, and lo !
Erred in its flight my spear, nor have I hit my foe."

44

Him by the thick plume then he rushed and caught,
Dragging his load the Achaian lines within,
Till the tight strap, with fine embroidery wrought,
Was throttling the soft neck beneath the chin.
Seemed that the child of Atreus should now win
Glory unutterable ; but one that knew,
Rending in twain the power of the tough skin,
Fair Aphrodite, did the work undo,
And in his firm clenched hand an empty helm he drew.

45

He with strong whirl among his friends in ire
Then dashed it, and the warriors that stood near
Lift up and carry it off. He, stung with fire,
Rushed back to kill the enemy with his spear.
But him sweet Aphrodite caught off clear,
Right easily in her power, with mist enwound,
And in the scented bower he loved so dear
Placed him ; then went for Helen, and her found
Hard by the lofty tower, much women standing round.

46

There, laying on the ambrosial robe her hand,
Twitched it, an aged woman in form and face,
Like her who once in Lacedæmon land
Dressed wool for Helen, and stood chief in grace :
" Homeward !" she cried : " thy lover to his place
Invites thee, on his fair couch glistening laid,
Not soiled with fight, but comparable in case
To one that for the dance is new-arrayed,
Or from the dance, now left, sits resting in the shade."

47

She with these words did Helen's heart much move,
Who, turning, the refulgent neck divine
Knew, and the snow-white breast, the home of love,
And the quick glances of her sparkling eye,
Then wondering spake : " What new deceit is thine,
Fell goddess ? whither art thou fain to bear
Me wretched, whither of all towns that shine
In Phrygia, or the sweet Mæonian air,
If that some child of earth thou lovest even there ?

48

"Tell me, hath Alexander lost, and now
Yearns Menelaus to lead home again
Me loveless, undesirable, that thou
Art come to me in guile? With *him* remain,
Him sit with, and from heaven thy feet refrain.
Weep, till his wife he make thee, or fond slave.
I go to him no more, to win new stain,
And scorn of Trojan women again outbrave,
Whelmed even now with grief's illimitable wave."

49

Whom Aphrodite full of wrath addressed :
"Hold, and provoke me not, lest to thy fate
I leave thee, and hereafter in my breast
Hate thee for ever with a burning hate,
Fierce as my love, and sharp revenge and great
Deal from both sides, and thou in misery fall."
She spake : nor Helen further word did wait,
Round her in silence wrapt the shining pall,
And, following in her fear, escaped the eyes of all.

50

So when they came to Alexander's house
Each to her several work the maidens went,
But she, divine of women, to her spouse,
Straight to the high-roofed chamber made ascent.
There Aphrodite, full of sweet intent,
Placed her a chair, with shining mantle spread,
Near Alexander. With eyes backward bent
Sat Helen, child of Zeus, beside the bed,
And in opprobrious words to Alexander said :

51

“ Safe from the field—far better hadst thou died,
By a strong man, my former husband, slain,
Whom, trusting in thy power, thou hast defied !
Now then, go dare him to the lists again :
Or to me wiselier hearken, and refrain,
Hearken to me, and save thy soul alive,
Nor, rushing like a fool to arms in vain,
Twice with the gold-haired son of Atreus strive,
Lest to his spear thou fall, and at thy doom arrive.”

52

And in the chamber Paris answering spake :
“ Vex not my soul with bitter words, dear wife,
Nor taunt me for thy former husband’s sake.
True, Menelaus hath prevailed in strife,
Helped by Athene on the wheel of life,
He now, but I hereafter, in my day,
For with us too the help of gods is rife.
But let this pass, and thou no more delay,
But snatch we the sweet hour, and use it as we may.

53

“ For never ravishment so deep yet burst
Over my soul with such a lightning dart,
Not when from lovely Lacedæmon first
With me in the fleet ships thou didst depart,
And in the island Cranaë mix thy heart
With mine in love, as I now feel for thee
Fervour within, and passion’s tender smart.”
He spake, and led her to the couch ; and she
Went, and the twain lay down in mutual transport free.

54

But Menelaus like a ravenous beast
Prowled through the host, if he might find his foe ;
And no man, from the greatest to the least,
Footman or knight, could Alexander show.
’Twas not that any, if he chanced to know,
Would hide or shield him for affection’s sake :
For, as black death is hated, even so
All hated him : there was no love to break.
Then lordly Agamemnon in the midst outspake :

55

“ Now all ye Trojans and Dardanians, hear !
Hearken ye too, their helpers in the war !
Brave Menelaus hath this victory clear ;
Therefore must ye no longer him debar
From Helen and what goods in question are,
But yield them up, with other payment due,
Fit monument to all men, near and far.”
Thus Agamemnon, in brief words and few ;
And all the other Achaians breathed assent thereto.

BOOK IV.

1

Now sit the high gods on the golden floor
Of Zeus in council, and Troy town behold ;
Fair Hebe to them all doth nectar pour ;
They to each other drink in cups of gold.
Then Zeus, to prove queen Hera, as of old,
Touched her with glancing words, and subtly said :
“ Two divine champions Atreus’ son uphold,
Hera of Argos, and Athene dread,
But far apart they sit, nor help, but gaze instead.

2

“ But ever Aphrodite standeth by
That other, and wards off the nearing fate,
And but now saved him, when he looked to die.
But, since the Argive wins, let us debate
Whether to move loud war and evil hate
Still, or a friendship to contrive for both.
If which thing please you, then in fair estate
That Troy continue am I nothing loth,
And Helen home return, according to the oath.”

3

He spake, but Hera and Athene then
Murmured within their teeth, as they sat near
And hatched calamities for Trojan men.
Athene on sire Zeus in mood severe
Scowled silent. Hera gave her wrath career,
And cried: "O scourge of heaven, what word is this!
My sweat to cast down Troy—must all end here?
Drive I my horses till they smoked for this,
Gathering the host?—yet do it, but thou doest amiss."

4

Answered in anger the cloud-driving Sire:
"What harm hath Priam or his house done thee,
That with an everlasting fierce desire
Thou burnest to raze Ilion utterly?
Were this enough then, in mid Troy to be,
And there eat Priam and his children raw,
And all the rest? Yet do what pleaseth thee;
Thine is the choice; lest this our bickering draw
Behind it a great fire. But hear me, and feel awe.

5

"When that I too would smite a city of thine,
Home of thy loved ones, give my fury rein,
Yielding as I do, though my heart repine.
For of all cities that man's race maintain
Under the stars, in the sun's wide domain,
None in my heart like place with sacred Troy,
And Priam and his people, could yet gain,
Who with rich steam and flowing wine accloy
Mine altar—such good things as we of right enjoy."

6

And unto him queen Hera then replied :
“ The cities that I love far best are three,
Argos and Sparta and Mycenè wide.
Take them away when hateful unto thee ;
Murmur I will not, nor their champion be.
For, should I hinder or withstand thy will,
Thine is the power, my labour is my fee.
Yet my work too must not be ended ill ;
My race is one with thine, I am a goddess still.

7

“ For of old Kronos’ daughters chief am I,
Not more of birthright than by nuptial place,
Since thou, my husband, art supreme on high.
But yield we, each to other, mutual grace,
That all do likewise. And now send apace
Athene to the gathering din below,
Spurring the Trojans to set hard their face
Against the Achaians who triumphant go,
And to contemn sworn oaths, and fiery insult throw.”

8

She ended, nor the Sire of gods and men
Hearing obeyed not her behest, but spake
In winged words to Athene there and then :
“ Fly to the host, fly quickly, and there make,
If that thou canst, the Trojan warriors break
Their sworn oaths, and with fiery insult bite
The Achaians, glorying for their victory’s sake.”
Then did she feel new fury, and in flight
Down to the earth came rushing from Olympus height.

9

As when Kronion streams a meteor star,
Swift, and behind it the sparks glittering fly,
Omen to sailors or wide camps of war,
So to the earth came rushing from the sky
Pallas Athene; and all far and nigh
Stared in amaze, and each to other said :
“ Now will Zeus send the roll of the rough cry
Of strife once more, or lasting peace instead,
Zeus, who of war doth wield the ministration dread.”

10

Thus did each Trojan and Achaian say.
She, like in aspect to Antenor's son,
Laodocus, strong chieftain, eager way
Through the mid squadrons of Troy's army won,
If divine Pandarus she could light upon.
Him girt with troops that from Æsopus tide
Came after him with shields, Lycaon's son,
She found there eminent in power and pride,
And in winged words addressed him, standing near beside :

11

“ Son of Lycaon, if thou hear me, aim
At Menelaus, and store up with Troy,
And most with Alexander, grace and fame.
Splendid from him thy guerdon, if to his joy
Thou Menelaus, Atreus' son, destroy,
And on the pyre he smoke. Aim, aim, and pray
With vows to him that doth the quiver employ,
Apollo, a rich hecatomb to pay,
Of firstling lambs, at home, on thy returning day.”

12

Thus spake Athene, and his foolish wit
Perverted, and he stript the shining bow,
Spoil of a goat which in the breast he hit
Forth issuing from the rock, and he below
Lurking in ambush to surprise it so.
Sheer down the cliff it tumbled. Palms sixteen
Up from its head did the horns towering grow.
These the horn-worker scraping smooth and clean,
Fastened them root to root, and tipt with golden sheen.

13

He on the earth now leaned it, strung with care,
While in the front his followers held a wall
Of knit shields, lest the Achæians on him there
Rush charging ere the son of Atreus fall ;
Then from the quiver a shaft tipt with gall,
New from the maker, winged with black decay,
Chose, and to Lycian Phœbus vowed withal
Rich hecatomb of firstling lambs to pay
In fair Zeleia's town, on his returning day.

14

Forthwith the arrow in its place he laid,
And set the notches that they should not swerve.
Firming his knees a steady aim he made,
And to his nipple strained the tightening nerve,
Till the sharp iron touched the bow's mid curve ;
Then loosed it, and the sinew terribly sang,
While in a moment, Fate's high will to serve,
Forth to its quarry the fell dart outsprang,
Yearning to flesh the hunger of its pointed fang.

15

Nor unremembered in that perilous hour
Thou, Menelaus, of the gods on high,
First of that virgin warrior, thy chief tower ;
Who the shaft thwarted and thus far awry
Turned, as a mother turns some biting fly
Back from her child recumbent in sweet sleep,
And of divine thought ruled it to where lie
Plates of the cuirass folded doubly deep,
And the firm links of gold the broad belt clasp and keep.

16

Came in its flight the bitter shaft, and fell
On the fair belt, and through the belt it drave,
And the strong cuirass wrought so goodly well ;
Yea the quilt also, trusted most to save,
His last help, even the tough quilt it clave,
Till the barb, lighting on the flesh within,
Paused, nor of life bereft the hero brave,
But scored the surface of the delicate skin,
Whence the dark blood quick channel to the light did win.

17

As when a woman of Mæonian race
Pure ivory with vermillion bright and clear
Hath dyed, the temples of a steed to grace,
And many are the knights that hold it dear,
Nor yet may have it : for a king to wear
Stored in her chamber it doth still remain,
Glory alike for steed and charioteer—
So, Menelaus, did that crimson grain
Thy beauteous thighs and knees and goodly ankles stain.

18

Then shuddered Agamemnon, king of men,
When from the wound he saw the red blood flow,
Yea, even valiant Menelaus then
Shuddered, in fear his day of doom to know.
But when the barbs and coil of string below
He saw not sunken, then his spirit again
Revived and came into his breast ; and lo,
The king groaned heavily with all his train,
And cried out, as he clasped his brother's hand amain :

19

“ Brother beloved, my covenant was thy death,
For that alone thou hast our champion stood.
Thee have thine enemies slain, and broken faith.
Yet the oath dies not, nor the victim's blood,
Wine and pledged hands, wherein we hoped for good.
For though the Father visit not to-day,
Yet shall he roll his vengeance in full flood
Hereafter. I have seen, have seen, I say,
These traitors with their heads and wives and children pay.

20

“ For in my heart I know it, the day, the hour,
Comes, it will come, when sacred Troy shall fall,
And Priam, and his people, and his power.
Then shall Kronion shake against them all
His own dark ægis, and their soul appal,
For this day's falsehood, nor shall crime go free.
But, Menelaus, if thou die withal,
Ah for the sorrow that shall come to me !
How blamed shall I thy brother in thirsty Argos be !

21

"For the Achaians will their land desire,
Troy and her king shall Argive Helen keep,
Our work fall, and thy bones in Trojan mire
Rot, and the enemy on thy grave will leap
And cry: 'Thus always Agamemnon reap
'Joy from his wrath! The host our walls came near;
'Now to his fatherland he sails the deep
'With void ships, leaving Menelaus here.'
Earth, open then thy mouth, that I no more appear!"

22

But Menelaus cheered his soul, and said:
"Take heart, nor terror on the Achaians throw;
This wound is not to death, thanks to the aid
Of brodered belt, strong girth, and quilt below,
Wrought up by men that metal-craft well know."
And thus did wide-realmed Agamemnon say:
"Brother beloved, may this indeed be so!
But let the leech prove now thy hurt, and lay
Medicinal herbs thereon, thy black pains to allay."

23

Therewith he ceased, and to the herald cried:
"Talthybius, go with all the speed thou hast,
And hither the renowned Machaon guide,
Son of Asclepius, who all else surpassed
In craft to heal, and shall in fame outlast,
That Menelaus, brave Achaian chief,
He may behold, shot by the fatal cast
From some bow wielded by false Lycian thief,
Or Trojan—his the glory, but to us the grief."

24

He spake, and to the host the herald then
Went, questing for Machaon. Him he found
Standing aloft, and troops of shielded men,
Who followed him from Tricca, ranged around ;
And he came near, and called the leech renowned :
" Son of Asclepius, rise, and bring relief
('Tis Agamemnon calls) to the sore wound
Of Menelaus, brave Achaian chief,
By foes shot—theirs the glory, but to us the grief."

25

Thus did he speak, and stirred the healer's breast ;
And up the wide Achaian host they went,
Till they arrived where all the Achaian best
Stood round the chief, their tower pre-eminent.
There he the shaft drew backward from the rent,
Through the tight cincture's fold, and, as he drew,
Lo, the keen barbs were broken off and bent.
Then broidered belt, strong girth, and tough quilt too
He loosened, wrought by men that metal-craft well knew.

26

When with his eyes he saw the wound where fell
The bitter arrow, he sucked out the blood,
And from medicinal herbs compounded well,
Erst to his father given by Chiron good,
Soft balms took cunningly, and sprinkling strewed.
But, he thus handling the brave chief with care,
On came the shield-clad Trojans in full flood.
While speedily to their arms the Achaians there
Rushed up, remembering battle and the joyous blare.

27

Then could one not see Agamemnon slow,
Cowed or asleep, but hastening on to fight.
He to Eurymedon the car let go,
And fleet steeds, snorting in their fiery might,
And charged him to be ready, if labour smite
His strong limbs, as he ruled the wide array.
He then on foot the long lines paced aright,
And whomsoever he beheld that day
Fervent for war, he cheered with fair words to the fray :

28

" Argives, add yet more fuel to this fire ;
False are your foes, they cannot come to good,
Nor will Zeus help them, the Almighty Sire,
Who, spite of oaths, have dipped their hands in blood.
Die must they all, their flesh be vultures' food,
Their wives and children ours, when we destroy
Their city and their name, and sail the flood."
But whosoever did not war enjoy
Heard him in angry mood these railing words employ :

29

" Braves of the long-bow, doth no shame remain,
That ye stand thus, like fawns aghast with fright,
Who, tired with running o'er the breezy plain,
Stand with no spark of soul, no grain of might ?
Thus stupidly ye stand, and dare not fight.
Fain would ye linger till the foe come near
The grey deep, and pounce down upon you quite,
Nestling amid your stranded ships in fear,
Waiting if Zeus put forth his arm, and shield you clear ?"

30

Thus down the long ranks, planting spurs of flame,
All in their tribes, the kingly leader passed.
Now to the Cretans, spearmen bold, he came,
Drawn round Idomeneus, and arming fast.
He, mid the foremost fighters towering vast,
Seemed in hot courage like a great wild-boar ;
And Mériones, cheering the troops, came last.
And Agamemnon, gladdening more and more,
Beheld them, and these words did courteously outpour :

31

" Idomeneus, of all good Danaan knights
Thee most I worship in war's toil divine,
Or when a work of lighter stamp invites,
As in the feast, when the best Argives dine,
Mixing in bowls the senatorial wine.
There all the Achaians drink an honest cup,
But thy great beaker is kept full like mine,
And, ever as we list, we quaff or sup.
But shine forth as of old, and to the war march up ! "

32

Answered the Cretan lord Idomeneus :
" O son of Atreus, I will stand indeed
Thy friend, thy liegeman ever, as is my use,
And as of old I promised and decreed.
Only the other Achaian men with speed
Urge to the front, that we join ranks and fight,
And to these covenant-breakers their just meed
Of bitterness and death quickly requite, [Right."
Tho the sworn oaths brake first, and marred the inviolate

33

Then passed the king, rejoicing much thereat,
And found the Aiantes arming in their place,
A cloud of foot on this side and on that.
As when a shepherd o'er the sea's dark face
Spies a cloud moving, the west-wind in chase,
(Far from the cliff where he his watch doth keep)
Dead-black to him, like pitch, nearing apace,
And leading a loud hurricane up the deep—
He shuddering to the cave hath driven his frightened sheep:

34

Long, dense, and like the coming of that cloud,
In black lines clustering around those twain,
Untameable of men, the Aiantes proud,
Surged the divine mass over the wide plain,
Noise of an iron din rolling amain,
And bristling to the war with spear and shield.
Nor Agamemnon could his joy refrain
Such to behold in harness for the field,
And in admiring words his kingly lips unsealed:

35

“O admirable of men, Aiantes twain,
Not, not to you this call to arms I bear,
Who now your own selves not a whit refrain
From heartening a great people far and near.
O Father Zeus, Athene, Phœbus, hear!
O that such spirit in the breast of all
Dwelt, and a like wish to their mind were dear!
Soon would the city of king Priam fall
Under our hands in dust, strewn tower and broken wall.”

36

This said, he left them, and to others went.
There forming line, men leavening with fierce mood,
Nestor he found, the old man eloquent,
Who with tall Pelagon and Chromius stood,
Hæmon, Alastor, Bias, noble in blood.
He in the forefront horsemen, car and horse,
Ranged ; in the deep rear footmen, many and good,
Shoring the battle ; in the midst the worse, [force.
Where, whether he would or would not, one must fight per-

37

First to the horsemen gave he charge to hold
Reins well in hand, nor in confusion drive.
"Trust not in horsemanship, be not too bold,
None to be first against the enemy strive,
Nor yet bate ground, lest harm and loss arrive ;
And in the shock of cars leap not afoot,
But with your spears push hard, and ye shall thrive.
Thus did the ancients wall and town uproot,
Holding in mind this counsel, and won fame to boot."

38

Thus the old man directed, from of old
Well seen in arms, and knowing war-craft best ;
Whom Agamemnon did with joy behold,
And called him, and in wingèd words addressed :
"As is the heart, old man, within thy breast,
Such were thy knees I would to God, this day !
But old age rubs and dwindles, like the rest,
Thee also ! Would that on a worse man lay
This burden, and green youth were given for thy decay !"

39

And the Gerenian knight answered thereto :
" Fain, Agamemnon, would I feel as when
I the divine prince Ereuthalion slew !
But the gods give not every gift to men :
Old am I now, I was a young man then.
Yet will I stand in battle, and even so
Teach wisdom, the fit work of aged men.
But spear and shield—to younger hands they go,
Men in the flower of days, who their own virtue know."

40

Then passed the king, rejoicing much in heart,
And mid the Athenian chiefs Menestheus found,
And wise Odysseus, and not far apart
His cloud of Cephallenians standing round.
Though now both camps were newly afoot, no sound
Of battle had yet reached them, waiting there
Till some great phalanx should the alarm resound,
Some thunder of the Achaians, launched elsewhere :
Whom Agamemnon marked, and did in nowise spare :

41

" Son of divine chief Peteos, and O thou
Brave in all craft and guile, why crouch ye here ?
Ye should be first, far-folded even now
In the red core of battle. When good cheer
Is forward, ye then first my summons hear ;
Then ye close valiantly on wine and meat ;
Now calmly could ye see it, and shed no tear
Of shame, though ten squares of the Achaians beat
Into the storm before you, and their enemies greet."

42

Him wise Odysseus sternly eyed, and said :
" O son of Atreus, what fell word is this !
How canst thou say my warlike spirit is dead ?
When Ares is abroad, when keen war is,
Soon with thine eyes shalt thou behold, I wis,
If these things touch thee, if thou care to see,
Telemachus' dear father not amiss
Working his work where foremost fighters be—
Mere windy talk is this which thou dost hurl at me."

43

But when the anger of the man came out,
Smiled Agamemnon, and the word upcaught :
" Zeus-born Laertiades, no more I doubt
Thy fire, nor spur thee nor upbraid in aught.
Thy manners and thy mind, how gently taught,
I know, and that thy soul with mine is one.
But go now ; this shall all be smoothly wrought
Hereafter, if things ill were said or done.
God make it all mere wind, claiming regard of none !"

44

This said, he left them, and to others went,
And found the son of Tydeus, Diomede,
Reining the horses in his proud car pent ;
And at his side stood Sthenelus, the seed
Of Capaneus. And Atreus' son gave heed,
And in rebukeful words the man addressed :
" Ah me ! alas ! canst thou, the child indeed
Of bold horse-taming Tydeus, thus at rest
Eye the long shoals of war, still cowering in thy nest ?

45

“ This did not Tydeus—where the fight was hot,
There was he found, as they affirm who knew
And saw him at his toils ; I saw him not.
He without war entered Mycenæ too,
A guest with Polynices, and there drew
The people to lend succour and assail
Thebes : and they did as he would have them do,
Willing to march and strive and not to fail.
But Zeus turned them away with ominous signs of bale.

46

“ He therefore with his friend departing went,
And to the rush-grown river Asopus came.
There Tydeus on an embassy they sent,
Who found with Eteocles, high in fame,
Much Thebans feasting. Fearless, without shame
Tydeus among so many rose alone,
Challenged them all, and conquered in each game
Of prowess : for Athene helped her own,
Helped with such power, and they were easily overthrown.

47

“ Wroth were the horseman-tribe of Cadmus then,
And planted in his path a secret train,
Where homeward he must travel, fifty men ;
Maion and Polyphontes, godlike twain,
Stood captains : all these were by Tydeus slain,
One only left, so many deaths among,
Maion ; thus willed the signs, not given in vain.
Such Tydeus was ; but from his loins hath sprung
One that is worse in war, but better with the tongue.”

48

Then spake the child of Capaneus, for he,
Strong Diomede, abashed, no word let fall :
" Lie not against thy heart, O king, for we
Transcend our sires : *we* came to Ares' wall,
By few men followed, and did Thebes enthrall,
Trusting the signs of heaven and help of Zeus.
But they that went before us perished all
In their own folly, and without excuse.
Match not their names with ours, that shine in nobler use !"

49

Him with a frown strong Diomede addressed :
" Hush, friend, and hear me. I not blame the king
Who thus the Achaians toward the fight hath pressed.
His will the fame be, when the spoil we bring
From Ilion : if we perish, his the sting.
But now let us remember furious fight—"
So from the chariot leapt with a loud ring
Of brazen arms about his breast, a sight
Whence even the brave might quail and tremble with affright.

50

As when the wave on a sea-thundered shore
Rolls with an army of waves in strong career,
Lashed by the driving Zephyr, and evermore
Swells from the far deep whitening, then draws near
The dry land in a fury of wrath, and there
Peals upward, shattering with a foamy crest
Round the sharp rocks its hollow-breasted sphere,
And spits up the salt brine—in fierce unrest
Thus streaming to wild war the Danaan legions pressed.

51

On came the chiefs, each calling to his troop,
But all else silent: it were hard to say
How such a host, not dumb, could so march up:
All fear in silence and the word obey;
All, starred with arms, flash many a blinding ray.
But even as ewes, that in a rich man's fold
Stand numberless, at milktide of the day
Hearing the voice of lambs, bleat uncontrolled—
Thus through the great wide host a noise of Trojans rolled;

52

Who neither to the field one language brought;
Mixed were their tongues; from many lands they came.
Here Ares, there divine Athene wrought,
Terror and Fear and Strife, with soul aflame,
Friend, sister, of the god that reaps high fame
In battle: small of stature a low head
At first she rears, but soon with loftier claim,
Her forehead in the sky, the earth doth tread.
She through the midst now wandered, and their fury fed.

53

They coming to one place together dash
Spear, shield, and strength of heroes, clad with mail;
Fierce with loud din the plated orbs they clash.
Earth runs a river of blood; yell, shout, and wail
Blend echoing, as men perish or prevail;
Such toil and sound as when from winter hills
Two hurtling adverse torrents in one vale
Mix, down a steep trough rushing, swoln with rills,
And the wild roar far off the wondering shepherd thrills.

54

There first Antilochus Troy's helmèd knight
Brave Echepolus slew, Thalysius' son.
That spear, the plume-crowned beaver shivering quite,
Sank in the forehead, and transpierced the bone.
Fled the sweet life, and on his eyes came down
Clouds and thick darkness. As when falls a tower,
So in the shock he fell: whom overthrown
Prince Elephenor from the javelin-shower
Dragged by the feet, to spoil him—but in evil hour.

55

He not for long exulted in his prey,
Whom now the mighty-souled Agenor knew
Trailing the dead not honourably away.
Where the foe stooping gave his flank to view,
Left naked of the shield, he smote and slew,
And his limbs loosened with the shafted spear.
Over him slain they make right bloody ado,
Foot twined with foot, dire things to see and hear :
Each, all, like famished wolves, ramp violently and tear.

56

In that field Aias, child of Telamon,
Anthemion's son, blooming in years unwed,
Slew, Simoïsïus ; whom in years ago
His mother, from the forest-crownèd head
Roaming of Ida, by her parents led,
Their flocks to visit, near the reedy stream
Bare, and from Simoïs named. He never paid
His parents, but his life fled like a dream,
Under the power of Aias and his fell spear-beam.

57

Him hurrying to the van did Aias quell,
In the right breast he smote him, and the brass
Came clean out at the shoulder. Down he fell,
Prone in the dust, as on the meadowy grass
Falls a black poplar by some wide morass,
Smooth trunk, but green aloft, whereto with steel
At dawn some chariot-making man doth pass,
And fells it for the bending of a wheel :
Withering it lies, and near it the slow stream doth steal.

58

Thus divine Aias Simoïsius slew ;
But Antiphus, the dazzling-plated son
Of Priam, caught the bloody work in view,
And aiming at the child of Telamon
Hurled, but the spear flew wide, and passing on
Hit Leucus in the groin, Odysseus' friend,
There trailing the dead spoil. He, tumbling prone,
Fell with a noise and came to his life's end,
While his relaxing fingers from the corpse unbend.

59

Forthwith Odysseus, for his comrade slain
In high wrath, to the outward verge his road,
Armed to the helm with brass that flashed amain,
Clave : to the mid gorge furiously he strode,
Stood, hurled, peering with eyes that terribly glowed ;
And to his hurling the whole Trojan wave
Reeled ; it was no vain cast ; the fatal goad
Democoön struck from the fleet car he drave,
Who from Abydos came, king Priam's bastard brave.

60

Clean through both temples of his head the brass
Ploughed, bone and casque, with one brief hideous pang;
Over his eyes the darkling death-clouds pass,
Such fury had found him. He with a dire clang
Dropt from the chariot, and his harness rang.
Then Hector with his vanguard bated ground;
Haled forth their dead the Achaians, yelled, and sprang
Far onward. And Apollo looked far round
From Pergamus in wrath, and cried a warning sound :

61

“ Rise up, ye Trojans, nor to Argives yield
In war : not iron is their flesh, nor stone,
To turn that sleet of javelins ye can wield.
No, nor Achilles, bright-haired Thetis' son,
Fights, but his own gall grieving feeds upon,
Far by the ships.” Thus cried forth from the tower
That dread god, but Athene stirred anon
The Achaians, she, the child of Zeus, with power
Moving amid the mass, wherever a heart might cower.

62

Fate there Diores Amarynceus' son
Caught, near the ankle on the dexter greave
Maimed with a jagged stone, which Piroüs, son
Of Imbrasus, the Thracian chief, did heave ;
Nor bone unsmashed nor tendons did it leave.
Back, with both hands spread toward his friends, the man
Tumbled. Up Piroüs rushed, him to bereave
Wholly of spirit, and end what he began ;
There in the navel speared him, and the gall outran.

63

Nor did Ætolian Thoas fail to smite
That victor, planting in his lung the spear ;
Then came, and tugged it from the wound outright,
Bared the keen sword, and smote the mid waist sheer,
And slew him ; spoiling not his arms, for near
Stood round him in that field the men of Thrace,
Armed with long lance, and crowned with knotted hair,
Who Thoas in his strength and power and grace,
Large though of limb, beat off, and shouldered from the place.

64

Thus he of Thracians lord, Epeians he,
Mute in the dust lie weltering side by side,
And round about them many slain there be.
Then mid the war could one but circling ride,
Whole and unhurt, with Pallas for his guide
To keep off from his head the javelin-shower,
Such in the grim work had no fault espied :
Trojans so many and Argives, strewn with power,
Mute in the dust lay weltering in that fatal hour.

BOOK V.

1

THERE valiant Diomedes, Tydeus' son,
Pallas Athene did with rage inspire,
All Argives in renown, and high feats done,
Far to transcend. His plated orb entire
And helmet she emblazed with intense fire,
Like that fruit-mellowing star, from Ocean's bed
That flames up mightier in the heavenly choir.
Such fire she lent him, shoulders, breast, and head,
Then, where the bray rang deadliest, the fierce warrior led.

2

One Dares was in Troy, rich, famed afar,
Priest of Hephæstus : sons to him were twain,
Phegeus, Idæus, both expert in war ;
Who on the chief rushed, with no following train,
They in a car, he horseless on the plain.
Now, near arrived, his shadow-casting spear
Phegeus at Diomedes hurled amain,
But the sharp point whizzed idly through the air,
O'er the left shoulder flew, and left him scathless there.

3

Then hurled the son of Tydeus no vain cast,
Smote Phegeus' breast, and dashed him from the car.
Forth leapt Idæus, and thence hurrying passed,
Nor stood guard on his brother slain in war ;
No, for his own doom had not then been far.
Him saved Hephæstus in a veil of night,
Lest grief the old man's life utterly mar.
Their victor, driving the steeds forth in might,
Quick to his own friends' care consigned them from the fight.

4

When Troy's brave people Dares' sons beheld,
This flying, that beside the chariot dead,
In the universal host fear gathering swelled.
And lo, Athene raging Ares dread
Took by the hand, then spake to him, and said :
" Ares, man-murdering Ares, grim with gore,
Could we not leave them their own lives to shed,
Till they discern which side Zeus honoureth more ?
Come, let us twain retire, lest Zeus our work abhor."

5

Him therefore to Scamander's margent green
She led forth. And the Trojans, front and wing,
Leaned wavering to the Danaan onslaught keen.
Each killed an enemy. Agamemnon king
Caught the Halizonian backward charioting,
First in the flight, huge Odios, and so drave
The implanted spear, so violent in his fling,
Through spine and midriff even the breast it clave ;
He heavily fell ; dire clang the glittering harness gave.

6

Spear-famed Idomeneus then Phæstus slew,
Who from the land of gleby Tarna came,
With long lance piercing his right shoulder through,
Where he stood mounting. To the earth he came ;
His eyes grow dark, his spoil the Cretans claim.
Lord Menelaus Strophius' son then caught,
Scamandrius, skilled to hunt the forest-game ;
Nor wonder ; Artemis herself him taught
To reach all the wild things that in the woods are sought.

7

Him the divine maid-archer Artemis,
Alas ! not profited at all that day,
Nor those far shootings never aimed amiss.
Where in the battle he fled fast away,
Him did Atrides Menelaus slay,
And the fell spear betwixt his shoulders drave,
Not to be turned by jointed mail astray :
Through spine and midriff even the breast it clave ;
He heavily fell ; dire clang the glittering harness gave.

8

Thus fell Scamandrius dead. And Méridones,
He too triumphant, killed Phereclus there,
Son of the craftsman, even Harmonides,
Who all deft handiwork, inlaid and rare,
Knew to achieve : such love toward him bare
Pallas Athene. He it was that wrought
Fleet barks for Paris, that the well-spring were
Of doom to Troy, and on his own head brought
Woe, for he learned not well that warning the seers taught.

9

Now like a falcon in the act to seize
His quarry as it flies, no succour nigh,
Close to his enemy came Mériones,
And smote him, heavily smote him, on the thigh.
Through the right loin the brass clave utterly,
And by the bladder, underneath the bone,
Came out into the light with crimson dye.
He tumbling on his knees with one deep groan
Fell, and the veil of death was o'er his eyelids thrown.

10

Meges Pedæus slew, Antenor's son,
His bastard, whom divine Theano yet
So nursed, as of her own dear children one,
To please her husband ; but Death's fatal net
Bound him for ever. Him that warrior met,
Spear-famed, the son of Phyleus, and came near,
And in his nape the pointed javelin set :
Forward the barb, by teeth and tongue, cut sheer ;
He in the dust fell biting the cold brazen spear.

11

Eurypylus divine Hypsenor quelled,
Son of the priest, who to Scamander bore
Due rites, and to the gods was equal held.
Him in the keen chase, flying fast before,
Eurypylus, Euæmon's son, smote sore
On the right shoulder ; and with trenchant blade
Clean from its trunk the mailèd arm he shore.
There in the dust a bloody stain it made,
And on his eyes grim Fate her purple fingers laid.

12

Thus in the clamorous field they toiling fare,
Nor of the son of Tydeus could one know
If he with Trojans or Achaians were ;
For through the plain he thundered to and fro,
As when a torrent, flushed with melting snow,
Drowns the low dykes, devouring weir and walls,
And doth the vineyard-barriers overflow
All in a moment, when the tempest falls,
Strews many a rural work, and many a hind appals—

13

Thus did he raving mow the Trojans down,
Nor they, so many, could his power await,
But him discerned Lycaon's glorious son
Driving the host, and dealing floods of fate ;
Then aimed an arrow, and the cuirass-plate
Smote of the warrior, on the neck's right side.
Clean through the mail the bitter barb clove straight,
And the fair armour was all crimson-dyed :
Glad was the Lycian's heart, and far and loud he cried :

14

“ Back to the fight, ye Trojan charioteers !
The best of the Achaians hath been hit.
Smite ye the rest, and hurl a rain of spears !
Him will mine arrow in its strength not quit
Till with the souls in Hades' realm he sit,
If truly Apollo me from Lycia led.”
Boasting he spake : that other whom he smit,
Not tamed, retiring to his chariot sped,
And Capaneian Sthenelus addressed, and said :

15

"Dear Capaneïan, from the car descend,
I pray thee, and this arrow's barbèd fang
Draw quickly from my shoulder, gentle friend!"
He spake : his comrade from the chariot sprang,
Stood near him, and the arrow's barbèd fang
Drew from his shoulder. Through the twisted mail
Up spouted the red blood with no light pang.
Nor did the warrior Diomedes quail,
But with a firm voice prayed, more vehement to prevail :

16

"O child of Zeus, Unweariable, give ear !
If thou wert ever at my father's side
In battle, O Athene, hold me dear,
Me also ! Him within my reach provide
Who shot me unawares, and vaunting cried
That I no longer the sweet sun must know."
Thus in his prayer. Nor Pallas him denied ;
Nimbler she made him, hands and feet below,
And in his ear spake forth, and bade him bravely go :

17

"Now, Diomedes, fight with heart more glad,
For I have given thee in thy breast to bear
All virtue that the terrible Tydeus had,
And lifted from thine eyes what cloud was there,
That they may truly god and man declare.
Now therefore, if a god thy path ensue,
Hold, nor in arms to meet the deathless dare ;
Save only Aphroditè. If thou view
Her in the field, strike home, and prove what thou canst do."

18

Thus she departed. He, though fierce before,
Raved trebly now, like to a lion fell
Whom shepherd of the farm hit leaping o'er
The fold, and grazed him, but not wounded well,
Then, careless the now deadlier beast to quell,
Crept into cover, and left the naked byre ;
The sheep fall huddling, and die where they dwell ;
Out leaps the lion in victorious ire—
Such Diomedes fought, impetuous with like fire.

19

Astynôus and Hypeiron first he slew,
One stricken in the breast with brazen spear,
One with the great sword cloven grimly through ;
From spine and neck the shoulder was cut clear.
These he forsook, thence following in career
Abas and Polyidus, godlike twain,
Sons of Eurydamas, the old dream-seer,
Who saw the vision of their doom in vain ;
Both by the son of Tydeus in that field were slain.

20

Next after Xanthus he, and Thoön, went,
The sons of Phænops, in his age born late.
He now lived pitiably, in years far-spent,
And other seed had none, to heir the estate.
But Diomede there quenched, by power of fate,
Them also, and of dear life both bereaved,
And caused their father to in vain await
Their coming, and his grey hairs sorely grieved ;
And at the last far kin the inheritance received.

21

Next of Dardanian Priam sons he caught
Twain, Chromius and Echemmon, in one car.
As when a lion, finding prey long sought,
On heifer or chance cow, that feeding are
Among the kine in gladed forest far,
Leaps violently, and doth the neck-bones break,
So did the son of Tydeus from their car
Them miserably reluctant hurl, and make
Their spoil his own, their horses to the ships bade take.

22

Him when Æneas from his place beheld
Thus line on line devouring wide and fast,
Down the long tumult of the field, that swelled
All round him as he moved, the hero passed,
Grimly intent; for in his soul he cast
If divine Pandarus he might light upon.
Him in the battle he discerned at last,
That valiant and good knight, Lycaon's son,
And in his eye stood forth, and spake his word anon :

23

"Where sleep thine arrows, Pandarus, where thy bow,
Thine honour, who in archery dost outvie
All us, nor even in Lycia peer dost know?
First lift in prayer thy hands to Zeus on high,
Then speed a shaft, that yonder captain die,
Him that rules here, and hath so handled Troy
That many a brave man's knees now loosened lie—
Or is it a god, not furnished to his joy
With sacred gifts? Who then can such a foe destroy?"

24

To him replied Lycaon's glorious son :
" Æneas, pillar of the Trojan field,
He to my thought is all like Tydeus' son ;
I know him by the chariot, helm, and shield.
If it be he, and not a god revealed,
Not without heaven he raves, but near beside,
Wrapt o'er the shoulders, and in mist concealed,
One of the everlasting doth abide,
Who my fleet shaft but now, on the edge of doom, turned wide.

25

" Already have I sent an arrow, and hit
The man's right shoulder, through the cuirass-plate,
Yea, and to Hades doomed him, but no whit
Quelled him withal : some god our side doth hate.
And here no steeds, no chariot, on me wait,
Though beautiful bright cars eleven in train
Stand, newly built, within my father's gate,
Wrapt in their woven veils, and horses twain,
Bound to each car, chew spelt and the white barley-grain.

26

" Oft did my father bid me go with car
And horses, but I would not, woe is me !
Sparing my horses, lest in straits of war
Food fail them, all unused to penury.
Thus hither on foot, trusting in archery,
I came—alas, not thereby benefited !
Two captains yonder one but now might see
Struck by my weapon, and they verily bled,
But from the barb death came not, but more rage instead.

27

“Woe worth that day when from the glittering wall,
Hector to serve, I took my shafts and bow,
And to fair Ilion from my father’s hall,
Captain of men, did with my Lycians go !
If ever I return, if ever I know
My country, my dear wife, my home again,
Let me fall headless to an enemy’s blow
Save the red blaze of fire these arms contain,
Splintered by me their lord : for they are windy vain.”

28

He ended, and Æneas answering spake :
“That be far off ! Nor yet will change ensue,
Till that with steeds and closing car we take
This man, full front, and see what strength can do.
Mount, then, my chariot : thou shalt quickly view
What Trojan horses can achieve, how swift
To scour the plain, fly, wheel, recede, pursue.
These will deliver us, though far loftier gift
Zeus mean the son of Tydeus, and his glory uplift.

29

“Thou therefore hold the glittering reins and thong,
And in the chariot I will stand and fight ;
Or fight thou, while the steeds to me belong.”
Answered Lycaon’s son, that glorious knight :
“Hold thou the reins, and rule thy steeds aright ;
So, if the child of Tydeus conquer yet,
They with their wonted charioteer in flight
Will speed the better ; lest they fume and fret,
And tangle us in the war, when they thy voice regret.

30

“ So in the dust will Diomedes mar
Us twain, and drive thy noble steeds away :
See therefore thou to thine own team and car,
And I with spear will meet him as I may.”
Thus in their talk did each to other say,
And, in the dædal car mounting anon,
Launched the fleet horses at their destined prey.
Whom discerned Sthenelus, the glorious son
Of Capaneus, and thus in winged words begun :

31

“ O Diomede of Tydeus, my dear friend,
Fierce on thy track two warriors I behold,
Each worth a host—one skilled the bow to bend,
Seed of Lycaon, Pandarus, hero bold,
And one, Æneas, of diviner mould,
Whom to Anchises Aphroditè bare.
If thou be wise, thy furious course withhold,
Draw to the chariot, rave not reckless there,
Lest, in the van close hemmed, full miserably thou fare.”

32

Him Diomedes sternly eyed, and said :
“ Prate not of yielding ; thou wilt not prevail.
Thus to fight flying, and to cower in dread,
Squares not to me with honour. I not yet fail
In virtue, but alone will even assail,
And chariotless, these twain. My soul within
Pallas Athene suffereth not to quail ;
Nor will the horses bear both warriors in
Safe from our hand, though one, haply, deliverance win.

33

"In this too mark me, let my word be clear :
If by Athene's grace both lives I slay,
Leave the fleet horses, these, in durance here,
Reined to the car's rim, and with speed away,
And drive me from the Trojan disarray
Yon horses of Æneas, that same seed
Which the great Father gave in ancient day
To Tros, the price of his son Ganymede,
Under the dawn far best of all that Earth can feed.

34

"Of that divine birth stole Anchises king,
By set mares, secret to Laomedon ;
Thence in his halls a brood of six did spring ;
Four in the stall he nurtured for his own,
And the two other gave his valiant son,
Both fierce, and breathing alarms. If we could take
These with our hand, much glory were then won."
Thus they conversing each to other spake,
While, the fleet chariot driving, the twain nearer make.

35

Him challenged first Lycaon's glorious child :
"Strong-hearted warrior, haughty Tydeus' seed,
Seems that my barbed shaft was all too mild ;
Proof now remains if I with spear succeed."
So the long-shadowy javelin hurled with speed,
And toward the cuirass thrilled the plated targe.
Shouted aloft Lycaon's glorious seed :
"Smit through the flank thou fallest : in my charge
Thy life I hold : my prayer thou hast fulfilled at large."

36

But Diomedes : " Thou art foiled again !
Yet ye will have it that I Ares sate
With blood of one or other of the twain—"
Then hurled. Athene sent the iron straight :
Nose, teeth it passed, and near the gullet's gate,
Starting to light beneath the uttermost chin,
Shared out the enrooted tongue. He, a dead weight,
Rolled from the shining chariot with loud din :
Swerve violently the steeds, and foam with quivering skin.

37

Forth leapt Æneas with long spear and shield,
In fear lest the Achaians spoil the dead,
Strode all about, and fenced him in the field,
Grim like a lion with eyes fiery-red ;
There with a yell spear, shield, and helmèd head
Still to each nearing enemy turned ; but he,
Tydeides, a great stone, heavy as lead,
Seized, more than two men lift, as men now be,
Dire bulk : but his one hand wielded it easily.

38

This Diomedes having taken up
Hurled at Æneas, and the hero hit
Just in the socket, which is called the cup,
Where the thigh turns. The rough stone, where it lit,
Both tendons tore, and brake the bone, and slit
The white skin. But the hero, as befel,
Thrown on his knees to earth, stayed firmly knit,
And with the arm his prone form pillared well
By main strength : yet black night upon his eyelids fell.

39

And truly had Æneas, king of men,
Died in the dust, and come to nothing there,
Had not his mother Aphrodite then,
Who to Anchises, tending kine, him bare,
Daughter of Zeus, discerned it, keenly aware.
She, pouring her white arms about her child,
The curtain of her shining raiment fair
Betwixt him and the gathering tumult wild
Held, and the spear-armed horsemen of their aim beguiled.

40

She thus her darling from the fight retired ;
Nor did the son of Capaneus forget
Faith to that covenant which his lord required.
Far from the rushing of the war as yet
His own steeds, tied to the car's rail, he set,
Then reft the Æneïan steeds of silken hair,
And lashed them toward the Achaians, bathed in sweat,
So to Deïpylus his comrade dear
Left them in charge, thence campward the good prize to bear.

41

This having done, himself, remounting then
His own car, on the glittering reins laid hold,
And toward the son of Tydeus, king of men,
Into the battle, where it fiercest rolled,
Held the fleet horses through the echoing wold.
He Cupris was pursuing, all unversed
In war-craft, as he knew, nor firm of mould,
Such as in peal of arms are counted first,
Athenè or Enýo, who stern Ares nursed.

42

Whom finding at the last, with forward spring
Close to the palm her tender flesh with spear
He wounded, the fair wrist excoriating.
For the keen barb the ambrosial robe cut sheer,
(Spun by the Graces, their own love-gift dear,)
And did the snowy flesh incarnardine
With ichor, that pure blood the immortals bear ;
For neither corn they eat, nor drink fierce wine,
Therefore man's blood possess not, and are called divine.

43

She then her son let go, shrieking aloud.
Him subtly thence by dint of power conveyed
Phcebus Apollo in a sable cloud,
Lest Danaan horsemen pierce him, reft of aid.
But Diomedes cried aloft, and said :
"Fly, O thou child of Zeus, from arms fly far.
Content thee that thy traps for women are laid !
But since thou meddlest where men fighting are,
Go, learn to wring thy hands at the very name of war !"

44

Thus did he cry : she fled with frenzied mind,
Fierce pangs without and bitter wrath within ;
Whom Iris, rival of the racing wind,
Drew from the danger and the battle-din ;
All crimson on the wrist her dainty skin.
She Ares on the left reclining found,
While rested on a cloud his javelin,
Car, and twin steeds ; there with her knees the ground
Smote, and with piteous arm him weepingly enwound :

45

"Brother beloved," she cried, "entreat me well,
I pray thee, and thy horses to me lend
For one brief hour, that to the mount where dwell
The everlasting deities, I may wend.
For a dire wound my flesh doth sorely rend,
Dealt on me by a mortal, Tydeus' son,
Fit to match Zeus in battle, and not bend."
She spake; and Ares to her prayer anon
Gave the gold-bridled steeds; she mounted, and was gone.

46

For Iris sprang beside her, seized the rein,
And lashed the horses, and they readily flew.
Soon at Olympus they arrived, where reign
The gods. There Iris from the chariot drew
The steeds, and near them food ambrosial threw.
But divine Aphroditè at the knees
Fell of her mother dear, Dionè, who
Clasped fondly and caressed her, fain to appease
Her anguish, and spake forth, and uttered words like these:

47

"Say now of all that dwell heaven's gate within
Who, my dear child, to thee this harm hath done,
Thee, as if openly some doer of sin?"
And Aphrodite, the sweet-smiling one,
Made answer: "Diomedes, Tydeus' son,
When I my child was stealing from their din,
For dearer than Æneas I hold none.
Ask then no more if Troy or Argos win;
War with the gods themselves these Danaans now begin."

48

Whom the divine Dione answered then :

“ Bear it, dear child ; albeit with grief, endure.

Have not we suffered at the hands of men,

Full many of us, strange things and hard to cure,

Wrapt in our own whirl of revenges sure ?

First Ares, whom Aloeus’ children bind,

Otus and Ephialtes, and immure

For thirteen moons in brazen cask confined,

Eating alone in darkness his indignant mind.

49

“ Yea, truly had Ares come to nothing there,

Ares, the wolf of war, but at the last,

Their father’s step-dame, Eëriboia fair,

Told it to Hermes : he their power surpassed,

Rescued, and stole him out, now fainting fast.

Hera, the queen of heaven, a pain not mild

Bare also, that three-bearded arrow cast

Into her right breast by Amphytryon’s child,

Whence there came, even to *her*, incurable pangs and wild.

50

“ Like hurt in the same field another won,

The enormous Hades, who below doth reign ;

From the same hand he felt it, by that son

Of Zeus thrown with the dead, and given to pain.

He to the far Olympus rushed amain,

Pang-pierced and grieving ; the fleet shaft, far driven

In the right shoulder, galled him, soul and brain.

But Pæan healed him with the balms of heaven,

As one divinely moulded, and to death not given.

51

“O guilt unutterable, O fool and blind,
To wound the gods that in Olympus dwell,
And work a horrible wrong with careless mind!
Thus too Athene loosed this warrior fell
On *thee*—poor mortal, not considering well
Who fighteth with the gods hath no grey hair,
Nor ever at the knees, that so rebel,
Are heard the little babbling voices dear,
When from the field he cometh to lay down his spear!

52

“Therefore let Tydeus’ son, though fierce and proud,
Consider, lest a mightier arm than thine
Find him—lest Ægialeia shriek aloud,
High spouse of Diomedes, knight divine,
And shake her servants from their sleep, and pine
In sorrow for the husband that she knew,
Who of Achaïans did far noblest shine.”
She ended, and the ichor’s trickling dew [grew.
Wiped with both hands : the arm then healed, and painless

53

But Hera and Athene in sharp wit
Spake, and were stirring up the Almighty sire ;
And thus Athene did fair Cupris twit :
“Zeus father, may I speak, nor move thine ire?
Cupris, I verily think, in haste to fire
With love some maid of Argos for her own
Dear Trojans, whom she doth so vastly admire,
Unwares the golden floweret of her zone
Hath fondling pressed—poor child, and hath it reached the
bone?”

54

She ended, and the Olympian Father smiled,
And thus to golden Aphrodite said :
“ Not unto thee the works of war, my child,
Are given : attend thou the sweet marriage-bed,
And all these matters to swift Ares dread
And to Athene shall belong.” Thus they,
But Diomedes, rushing fierce ahead,
Made for Æneas ever, his stolen prey,
Though weening well to find Apollo in the way.

55

For even of gods he recked not, but was fain
To smite and spoil Æneas in that field.
Thrice he essayed his enemy to have slain,
And thrice Apollo struck his glittering shield.
When the fourth time, like some great power revealed,
He came, Apollo the Far-darter cried :
“ Thou son of Tydeus, know thyself, and yield ;
Nor fight with heaven : for not in race allied
Are the everlasting gods, and men on earth that bide.”

56

Then Diomedes a short space withdrew,
Fearing to meet Apollo's wrath, I wis.
And the great god Æneas saved anew,
And caught him to the holy Acropolis,
Where his own glorious temple builded is,
Far from the storm of fighters in the plain.
There the divine maid-archer Artemis,
And Leto, the brave warrior from his pain
In the renowned shrine healed, and beautified again.

57

Then did the master of the silver bow
Frame like Æneas, such in arms, mien, height,
A phantom ; and around it friend and foe
Clave bull-hide shields, and targes feathery-light.
But he to Ares : “ Draw me now this knight
Back from the field, O Ares, grim with gore,
This, who with Zeus would even measure his might.
First Cupris’ arm he smote, urging her sore,
Then, like some power divine, hard on myself he bore.”

58

Then he to Pergamus returned apace ;
And forth went Ares to the Trojan line,
Like Acamas, the captain swift of Thrace,
Calling aloud to Priam’s sons divine :
“ O children of great Priam, king divine,
How long the people will ye leave, how long,
To die thus, and with terrible leanness pine ?
Or are ye tarrying to avenge the wrong,
Till on your well-built gates the Achaian flood beat strong ?

59

“ See where a man lies, whom but now we held
Brave with the best, and godlike Hector’s peer,
Noble Anchises’ child, in battle quelled,
Æneas—up, make haste, deliver we clear
From this wild thunder of arms our comrade dear.”
With such words he the mind and spirit of each
Strove to replenish ; and Sarpedon there
Pricked divine Hector with rebukeful speech :
“ Where is thine arm, O Hector, that of old could reach

60

"So far? O whither is thy strength now flown?
Art thou not he of whom that boast is told
That with the kinsmen of thy house alone,
Naked of alien help, thou Troy couldst hold?
Where are they now, thy clan, so many and bold?
Like dogs about a lion down they cower,
Heavy their limbs hang, and their heart is cold;
None can I see, not one, in perilous hour;
We, the help scorned so late, here fight, we only, in power.

61

"For I from far, thine alien help, am come,
Since Lycia is far off, by Xanthus flood.
My wife I left, one little babe, at home,
Much wealth, and many an enviable good:
Yet even I the Lycians urge; my blood,
Though nothing own I here for men to spoil,
Burns for a foe—but thou hast silent stood,
Nor gatherest up thy friends, to bid them toil,
And shield both wife and children on their native soil.

62

"See that ye fall not on an evil way,
Caught here inevitably in coil and snare,
And to your enemies be found a prey,
While your high towers crash ruining through the air!
But it is thine, O Hector, to beware,
Thine to be meditating day and night,
To soothe the allies, and speak the chieftains fair,
And hold them to the work with main and might,
And to put far away all insolence and despite."

63

Thus spake Sarpedon, as in scorn, and bit
Inly the soul of Hector: he anon
Leapt forth in arms and on the plain alit,
Shaking his gleamy javelins; so passed on
Through the whole army of men, and bade them don
New courage, and the impetuous strife renew.
They rallying wheeled, and on a sudden shone
Massed in full front before the Achaians, who
Firmly abode their onset, and no whit withdrew.

64

As when a blowing on the floors divine
Whirls the light drift in winnowing, when the grain
Golden Demeter doth from husk refine,
And heaps of wind-swept chaff whiten the plain,
So on the Danaans poured a white dust-rain,
Hurled from beneath their trampling horses' feet
To the arch all-brazen, as they wheel again,
And with a roll of chariot-thunder beat
Fierce up the field to vanward, and there mix and meet.

65

And in the tempest moving to and fro,
Vast Ares, irresistible in might,
Did to the succour of the Trojans go,
And the war covered with a cloud of night,
Thus working in his zeal to serve aright
Him of the silver bow and golden sword,
Who, when Athene he saw vanish quite,
Nor longer to the Danaans help afford,
Comforted thus the Trojans, and their heart restored.

66

Himself Æneas then from the rich shrine
Sent forth, implanting in his eager breast
Virtue to fight : and lo ! the chief divine
Stood in the plain, and mingled with the rest.
They seeing him alive, from heel to crest
Scatheless and pure of harm, joyed in their mind,
Yet asked him nought : far other was the quest
Now moved by Ares who doth plague mankind,
And by the glorious Archer, and Strife raging blind.

67

There the Aiantes and Odysseus urge,
With Diomede, their men ; these in the flood
Stand as a breastwork to the enemy's surge,
Unagitated in storm. Like clouds they stood,
Massed by Kronion o'er a mountain wood,
When he the wrath of Boreas lulls in sleep,
And all the other winds of violent mood,
Who, blowing in their strength o'er land and deep,
Hurtle the shadowy clouds, and the wide ether sweep.

68

Thus calm abode the rushing of their foe
Those Danaan men, nor ever blenched with fear,
While Agamemnon, hastening to and fro,
Sped through the ranks, and uttered words of cheer :
“ O quit yourselves like men, my friends ; O bear
A good heart : honour in the fight this day
Yourselves : of men that hold true honour dear
More in the battle the gods save than slay,
But cowards have no strength, and bear no fame away.”

69

Speaking he hurled, and hit the foremost one,
The loyal comrade of Æneas brave,
Deicoön, of Pergasus the son,
To whom the Trojans equal honour gave
With Priam's children, to their cause he clave
So stoutly. Agamemnon his spear dashed
In the man's shield, and through it the brass drave:
Clean past the zone the utmost belly it gashed.
He in the dust rolled headlong, and his armour clashed.

70

Of Diocles the sons Æneas there,
Brave chiefs, Orsilochus and Crethon found
And slew. Their father dwelt in Pheræ fair,
Famed for his wealth. Their stock was of renowned
Alpheüs stream, who o'er the Pylian ground,
By tract of meadowy plain, or hung with trees,
Broad wanders—he begat, as time went round,
Orsilochus, not least of sovereignties:
Orsilochus begat the high-souled Diocles.

71

And to this Diocles two sons there came,
Orsilochus and Crethon, in one day,
Well seen in arms, and both of noble name.
To these no sooner had youth flowered, than they
Forth to the knight-famed Ilion bent their way
In black ships, counted with the Argive train,
Armed in the cause of Helen, and to pay
Service of honour to the Atridæ twain—
But the death-fate now seized them on this fatal plain.

72

As when two lions on the mountain bred,
Twins of one mother, nursed in thickets deep,
Come from the woods in famine fierce, and spread
Infinite slaughter among kine and sheep,
Nor from the very farms their ravage keep,
Till at the last the heavy hands of men
In their life's blood the cutting iron steep ;
So to Æneas each twin warrior then
Fell, as a great pine falleth in a windy glen.

73

Whom pitying fallen, Menelaus king
On past the rank of foremost fighters came,
Helmèd with refulgent brass, and brandishing
His great spear. Ares did his breast inflame,
Meaning Æneas should by strength him tame.
But when Antilochus, old Nestor's son,
Discerned him, he too past the fighters came,
In fear lest somewhat to the chief be done,
And of the toilsome war no fruit be ever won.

74

Then were those twain both arm and beechen spear
Each at the other uplifting, hot for blood ;
But in a breath Antilochus quite near
Beside the shepherd of the people stood.
Nor did Æneas, though a warrior good,
Wait, when he saw two friends thus close remain.
They the poor brethren hale from the war's flood,
And to their comrades dear deliver them slain ;
Then to the raging battle they return again.

75

Godlike Pylæmenes they vanquished first ;
Whom, of the shielded Paphlagonians best,
Riding erect, the son of Atreus pierced
With strong lance, where the key-bone of the breast
Locks with the neck, and him with doom oppress.
Antilochus in the elbow with a stone
Hit, when in act the steeds rearward to wrest,
Mydon the charioteer, Atymnius' son,
And the reins ivory-shining in the dust fell down.

76

Whom straight Antilochus up hastening smote
With drawn sword on the temple furiously ;
And Mydon, with the death-gasp in his throat,
Lurched ruining from the well-built chariot high.
Downward he pitched, brow first, feet to the sky,
And a long moment (for the sand was deep)
Inverted stood, till the horses, plunging by,
Trampled him down. Antilochus with a leap
Sprang to the car, thence drove it, his own prize to keep.

77

Soon Hector saw, shouted, and forward won,
And in his wake Troy's power in phalanx bore.
Ares and awful Enyo led them on ;
She banded with insatiable Uproar,
While Ares, spear in hand, now moved before,
Now after. Diomede beheld and shook.
As when a clown, no swimmer, tired and sore,
Comes on a foam-white seaward-rushing brook,
And back recoils, so he, by steps, the van forsook.

78

"Marvel no longer, O my friends," he cried,
"Hector to view thus dreadful in the fight.
Ever some guardian god is at his side.
See yonder now, in form a mortal wight,
Ares. Draw back from Troy's advancing might,
So helped, nor battle with the gods desire."
Then came the Trojans like a cloud of night.
Anchialus and Menesthes, knight and squire,
Hector in one car slew, both valiant, hearts of fire.

79

Whom pitying, Telamonian Aias came,
And smote Amphius with bright javelin.
He, lord of Pæsus, rich in fields and fame,
Helped, by divine doom, Priam and his kin.
Under the tough belt the long spear went in :
Loud he clanged falling : and with speed upran
Illustrious Aias, the fair spoil to win.
Then, from the Trojans, on that shield-fenced man
Of sharp and glittering spears a mighty hail began.

80

He, with a foot well planted and firm grip,
Wrenched forth amain the brazen spear, nor yet
From the dead shoulders the fair arms could strip,
So by that brazen hail was he beset,
And with alarm, if like a circling net
Troy's lordly troops environ him for their prey ;
Spearmen so many and brave now gathering met,
And him, though large, proud, terrible in the fray,
Forced to bate earth and yield, by main strength shaken away.

81

Meanwhile against divine Sarpedon Fate
Sent forth Tlepolemus the Heracleid,
Grandson of Zeus, to meet the son, both great
And brave. Him first Tlepolemus defied :
“ Why thus, Sarpedon, from the battle hide,
Low cowering like a hare ? They lie that say
Zeus made thee, and thy mother was his bride.
Weaker in all things art thou seen than they
Of whom this glory on earth is told in ancient day ;

82

“ Such as that lion-heart in his wild joy,
Heracles king, to whom I stand the son,
Who cleared the streets, and wrecked the town of Troy,
When for the horses of Laomedon
He came with six ships, and men almost none.
But thou art poor of soul, thy people pine.
Woe worth their lives who to thy shelter run !
No help thou camest, though thou wert divine,
But to pass Hades' portals by this spear of mine.”

83

To him Sarpedon, Lycian chief, replied :
“ Tlepolemus, thy father wrecked indeed
Troy, through Laomedon's ungenerous pride,
Who the well-doer abused of his just meed,
Horses by long toil won. But thou take heed,
Since of black murder I forewarn thee now,
Yea, by this hand I tell thee it is decreed
Thou to the car-famed Hades, even thou,
Dead shalt go down, and me with lofty fame endow.”

84

Thus spake Sarpedon ; and his javelin
Tlepolemus uplifted—through the air
Both in one moment the spears whistling spin.
Hit the mid neck Sarpedon ; the brass tare
Clean through it, and dark night to the warrior bare.
Tlepolemus with barb of ashen beam
Had thrilled the left thigh of his foeman there.
Forth passed the metal in a crimson stream,
Grazing the bone. High Zeus kept off the bale extreme.

85

His comrades then divine Sarpedon drew
Clear of the fight ; but the huge trailing spear
Much galled him : no man had the wit nor knew,
For very alarm and haste, to hale it clear,
Fit for the car, such zealous friends they were.
Tlepolemus alike the Achaian men,
On their side of the field, from battle bear.
Whom saw, most patient of the sons of men,
Odysseus, and his heart boiled up with passion then.

86

First he debated in his doubtful breast
Whether the child of thundering Zeus to kill,
Or of the Lycians to cut off the rest.
But, as it chanced, so went not Fate's high will
That he with brass the child of Zeus should kill.
Him on the Lycian troop Athene set
There Chromius and Alastor he laid still ;
Soon with Alcander and Halius earth was wet ;
Prytanis, Noëmon, fell ; and many another yet

87

Had fallen of the Lycians that same hour,
But with refulgent brass, and plume on high,
Hector appeared, arrayed in awful power,
Much to Sarpedon's joy, who wailed this cry :
" Leave me not, child of Priam, here to lie,
Their prey; succour me now ; and then let life
Fail me in Troy ! for 'tis my fate that I
Homeward return not from this mortal strife,
Nor see my child again, nor gladden my dear wife."

88

He spake ; but Hector, answering nought, rushed on,
As by a fell spur driven, the foe to reach ;
And the men laid divine Sarpedon down
Under Zeus' shade, a leafy breadth of beech.
Then Pelagon his friend (right dear was each
To other) from his wound the weapon drew ;
And his eyes darkened, he lay mute of speech ;
Yet gradually revived ; the north wind blew
Cold to his gasp, and stirred the failing pulses through.

89

Meanwhile the foe, when they of Ares knew,
Fled not, nor stood, but slowly bated ground.
Tell me, O Muse, whom first, whom last, they slew,
Ares and Hector with bright helmet crowned.
First with the slain was godlike Teuthras found,
Then bold Orestes and Ænomaüs,
Trachus, Ætolian warrior, far renowned,
And who in Hyla dwelt, Oresbius,
Rich, by Cephisis lake, and bright-zoned Helenus.

90

But white-armed Hera, when thus hotly pressed
The Argives she perceived to fall and wane,
Thus to Athene winged words addressed :
" O child of Zeus, unweariable, in vain
Did we to Menelaüs our word ordain,
That he the wall of beauteous Troy should mar,
And safely with his fleet sail home again,
If Ares we permit to rave thus far.
Come, let us twain in turn bethink ourselves of war."

91

Thus she persuading ; nor withheld consent
Stern-eyed Athene. But that goddess dread,
Hera, the child of mighty Kronos, went
And harnessed the fair steeds gold-frontleted,
While to the car's steel axle Hebe wed
Brass wheels, of eight rays, with eternal gold
Rimmed, and each rim strong brazen hoops imbed,
Fast molten to it, a wonder to behold ;
And a bright nave of silver doth each disc enfold.

92

Poised is the car by gold and silver chains,
Round the fair seat two rails extended run,
And the front base a silver pole contains,
Set like a mast, in silver ; now thereon
The carved yoke, all of gold, in splendour shone.
This Hebe fixed, and in their place made fast
Traces of golden twist. When all was done,
Hera then yoked the eager horses last.
Straight, ere she went, her soul into the battle passed.

93

Meantime the child of ægis-bearing Zeus,
Pallas, the filmy pictured robe she wore,
Wrought by her own hands for herself, let loose
So that it streamed along her father's floor;
Then she put on that tunic famed of yore,
His, and the arms for saddening combat meet;
Next the dire ægis cast her shoulders o'er,
With waving tassels hung, ridged with Defeat
And visionary Amaze, as with a crown complete.

94

Therein behold fell Strife, and warlike Ire,
Screams, and pale Torments of the death-plain red,
Also that wonder of the eternal Sire,
Grim ruin of a horrible monster dread,
Awful unutterably, the Gorgon's head.
Then did her brows the helm of gold assume,
With carved kings of a hundred towns bespread,
Two-beavered, on each side a double plume;
And on the flaming car with steady feet she clomb,

95

And on the iron-pointed spear laid hold,
Heavy and tall, wherewith she smites amain
Earth's warriors, till her anger waxes cold.
Hera the horses plied with scourge and rein,
And Heaven's wide gates, of their own impulse fain,
Clanged open, that dense cloud, which the Hours keep,
Who guard the whole Olympian vast domain,
At will to open or shut. Here forth they sweep
To where Zeus sits alone on the divine hill-steep.

96

There white-armed Hera checked her steeds, and cried:
" O father Zeus, how long shall Ares slay
My people ? see what deaths ! *I* am defied,
But Cupris and Apollo enjoy their day,
All through this savage, whom no judgments stay.
O father Zeus, wilt thou be wroth if I
Wound Ares deep, and thrust him from the fray ?"
Whereto the Cloud-compeller made reply:
" Send Pallas : she knows best what remedies to try."

97

He spake ; and Hera, when his mind she knew,
Lashed on the horses. They with eager flight
"Twixt earth and starry heaven their course pursue.
Far as the region of blank air in sight
Of one who, sitting on some beacon height,
Views the long wine-dark barrens of the deep,
Such space the horses of the realms of light,
Urged by the gods, as on they strain and sweep,
While their hoofs thunder aloft, bound over at one leap.

98

But when they came to Troia, and that place
Where Simois and Scamander mix in one
Their rivers, Hera in her queenly grace
Now halted, loosing from the car anon
Her steeds ; and round them a thick mist she spun,
While Simois yielded for them food to eat,
Ambrosia. But they twain were quickly gone,
Speeding, to help the Achaians in defeat,
Like doves of tremulous wing that to the wood retreat.

99

But when they came to where the most and best
Stood by horse-taming Diomede, their tower,
Shoulder to shoulder, in close circle pressed,
Like unto lions that raw flesh devour,
Or to wild boars, that neither fly nor cower,
Shouted the white-armed Hera there and then,
Seeming like Stentor, with his heart of power
And brazen voice, beyond the voice of ten—
Yea, he could shout more loud than fifty chosen men.

100

“Shame on you, pitiful poor folk,” she cried,
“Who yet so admirable in form appear!
While the divine Achilleus on your side
Fought in the war, no Trojan ventured here;
All in the Dardan keep lay wrapt in fear;
Such was the terror of his arm, I trow.
Far from the city now, with sword and spear,
Even at the hollow ships behold your foe!”
Thus did she make each breast with zeal and fury glow.

101

But the stern-eyed Athene hurrying ran
Toward Tydeus' son, such keen desire she felt,
And by his steeds and chariot found the man
Cooling his wound, by Pandarus' arrow dealt;
For much sweat tired him under the broad belt
Of the heavy orbèd shield; and worse, that stroke
Made his arm droop. He, lifting the broad belt,
Now the dark gore wiped. On the horses' yoke
Stretched forth her hand Athene, and upbraiding spoke:

102

“Lo, Tydeus hath begot one meaner far !
Tydeus was puny in frame, but strong to fight :
Whom when I held from blazing forth in war,
While solitary in Thebes, environed quite
With numbers, a lone envoy—he (despite
My counsel to feast quiet in the hall)
There gathering in his breast that soul of might
Steadfast as ever, rose with fearless call,
Challenged the youths Cadmeian, and surpassed them all.

103

“Thou, by whose side I stand, whose life I guard,
And bid thee against Trojan men good speed,
Com’st far behind him. Either toil hath marred
Thy limbs with stormy affliction, or indeed
Pale fear unhearts thee. Thou art no true seed
Of Tydeus, nor of valiant Ceneus’ line.”
Answered thereto strong-hearted Diomede :
“Child of great Zeus, I know thee, power divine ;
Therefore I readily speak, nor hide what thought is mine.

104

“Neither pale fear unhearts me, nor yet sloth ;
But thine own precept I remembering kept.
Didst thou not warn me in this field be loth
To fight gods, Aphrodite only except,
Her to assail alone? She met me, and wept.
Therefore it is that I now backward draw,
I and the rest who at my word still crept
Yielding before the enemy, since we saw
Ares at large among us, and I held thy law.”

105

And the stern-eyed Athene answering said :
" O son of Tydeus, to my soul right dear,
Nor Ares thou nor any immortal dread !
Trust in my help, drive on, strike without fear
This vague pest, meteor-like, in nought sincere ;
Who did firm troth to me and Hera bind,
Troy to assail and Argos help, but here
Sides with the Trojans, to their cause is kind,
And these are clean forgotten, as dead men out of mind."

106

Then Sthenelus from the car she dragged, and he
Sprang quick to the earth. By Diomede anon
Pallas went up, raging unutterably.
Heavily did the beechen axle groan,
Such burden it bore—that goddess in her own
Full power, and a great hero nobly nursed.
Then clutched the scourge and reins that glittering shone
Pallas Athene, and, for war athirst,
Dashed with the well-trained horses against Ares first.

107

He the best captain of Ætolia's realm,
Gaunt Periphas, was spoiling. Now, to elude
Ares, Athene put on Hades' helm.
But when horse-taming Diomede he viewed,
Ares, the Man-destroyer, with gore imbrued,
He, lightly esteeming of the prey first won,
In that same moment other work ensued,
Slain Periphas let fall, Ochesius' son,
And against noble Diomede rushed maddening on.

108

When they closed up together in hot career,
Infuriate Ares across yoke and rein,
Leaning well forward, thrust his brazen spear,
And Tydeus' son would verily have been slain,
But that Athene made the onset vain,
And swung by force the idle weapon aside
Clean o'er the chariot-rim. Full bravely again
Far-shouting Diomedé his own thrust plied,
And direly Athene dug it into Ares' side.

109

Deep in the flank beneath the zone it ploughed,
(So truly it thrilled him) and the white flesh tore ;
Then was it wrenched forth, and he roared aloud
As men nine thousand or ten thousand roar
When in the field with fronted ranks they pour,
Rolling together in arms, with hostile might ;
So that amazement seized, and trembling sore,
Both armies, like a sudden alarm at night,
So lustily Ares roared, the insatiable of fight.

110

As from the clouds a murky gloom is cast,
When rough winds after heat the heaven invade,
Such to the son of Tydeus, as he passed
To far Olympus, wrapt in cloudy shade,
Seemed Ares. Soon in the gods' clime he stayed
His flight ; there, wrung to be so mauled of man,
Sat beside Zeus Kronion, and displayed
The immortal blood which from his wound outran,
And with lamenting murmur wingèd words began :

111

"Are these bold works mere nothing in thy mind,
Zeus Father? In our feuds some dreadful strait
We gods still suffer, as we help mankind.
All against thee find cause, who that wild Fate
Hast for thy child, nor wilt her fury abate.
All we the rest, who in Olympus dwell,
Bow to thy yoke and in allegiance wait
Thy sovran hest: but thou dost not curb well
This thine own pestilent child, but even more impel.

112

"Yea now, behold, proud Diomede she hath sent
Like a wild beast immortals to devour.
First Cupris on the wrist he bitterly shent
In close fight: next, like an immortal power,
Swept furiously on me: but this safe bower,
Far from earth's wrack, with flying feet I sought,
Else verily I had borne, for no brief hour,
Rolled in the dead-heaps, misery passing thought,
Or lived weak as a ghost, such terrible blows I caught."

113

Answered the cloud-compelling Sire divine:
"Thou meteor pest unfaithful, sit not here,
Nor in my presence thus complain and whine;
Since of all gods that in our courts appear
Thou to my soul art ever the least dear.
Strife, war, and battles are thy pastime sweet;
Thy mother's vengeable temper thou dost bear,
Hera's, whom scarce *my* words to reason beat:
Her evil practice now hath prompted thy defeat.

114

“ Nevertheless not long will I thee leave
Touched with disaster, for my seed thou art,
Mine, whom thy mother did from me conceive :
For hadst thou, with like furiousness of heart,
In other than ourselves held natural part,
Under the Titans thou wouldst soon have lain.”
He spake, and Pæan with celestial art
Stilled, at the word, with soft balms Ares’ pain,
Ares not woman-born nor fated to be slain.

115

Swift as, in churning, a sour sap draws up
In curds the white milk running wet before,
While the wand flashes in the mixer’s cup,
Ares was healed : whom Hebe from his gore
Laved in the bath, then robed him. He, far more
Rejoicing in his strength, by Zeus reclined.
Now also to the Olympian mansion soar
Hera and Pallas, joying each in mind
Thus to have tamed dire Ares who doth plague mankind.

BOOK VI.

1

So the gods passed, while men roll war anew
From Xanthus stream to Simoïs o'er the plain.
First Telamonian Aias, breaking through
Troy's phalanx, gave his people light again,
For Acamas, the noblest Thracian, slain ;
Whom on the hair-plumed helmet by surprise
He smote, and the brass ploughed through bone and brain.
Dead to the earth in all his ample size
With rattling arms he fell, and darkness veiled his eyes.

2

Diomedes Teuthras' son Axylos slew.
He in the fair Arisbian land held sway,
Rich, and beloved of all men that he knew,
For he loved all, and near the public way
Dwelt, with free doors. Yet no man in that day
Came or was found to shield a friend so dear.
Him did that hero with Calesius slay,
His faithful servant and then charioteer ;
Together the two ghosts in Hades' realm appear.

3

Euryalus soon left Opheltius there,
Dresus, Æsapus, Pedasus, undone.
These twain the Naiad Abarbarea bare
To prince Bucolion, the eldest son,
Not wedlock-born, of proud Laomedon.
He with the nymph once mingled, tending sheep;
Twin children she conceived: Mekisteus' son
Loosed their strong limbs, and in the iron sleep,
Stript of their arms, he left them, for their friends to weep.

4

Odysseus a Percosian overthrew;
Staunch Polypcetes tamed Astyalus;
Teucer the godlike Aretaon slew;
Old Nestor's son, bright-speared Antilochus,
Ablérus; Agamemnon, Elatus,
Who by the lovely-flowing Satnian stream
Dwelt in high Pedasus. Brave Leïtus
Caught Phylacus in flight with bale extreme;
And o'er Melanthius stood Eurypylus supreme.

5

Far-shouting Menelatis Adrastus took
Alive. His horses, scouring through the plain,
Break in a branch of tamarisk pole and yoke,
Then, wrapt in the universal panic, strain
Homeward. He tumbling to the dust amain
Dashed o'er the wheel, mouth first. There near him stood,
E'en there, Atrides Menelaus, fain
To bathe his shadow-casting spear in blood;
Whom by the knees he clasped, and spake in suppliant mood:

6

"Take me alive, O chief! Much treasure rare
Lies in my father's house, thy guerdon free.
Silver, brass, gold, elaborate steel is there.
Glad will my father render infinite fee,
If living at your ships he hear of me."
Speaking he moved the heart of Atreus' child,
Who to his squire was giving strait decree
Captive to lead him. But in mood less mild
Up Agamemnon ran, and that soft charge reviled :

7

"O my sweet brother, hath Troy served so well
Thy house, that thou wilt spare her warriors dear?
O may not any 'scape our hands, nor hell!
No, not a man-child in the womb go clear!
All be wiped out,—no burial, and no tear!"
Then the chief spurned his suppliant, as was right.
Adrastus, riven in flank by the king's spear,
Fell backward. Agamemnon in his might
On the dead breast set heel, and tugged the barb to light.

8

Loud to the Argives shouted Nestor then :
"Friends, Danaan heroes, lag no more in dread
Lest of the spoil ye lose :—now slay we men.
After, in quiet shall ye strip the dead."
So with his words the fire of each he fed.
Then had the Trojans in their fell defeat
To Troy gone up, and to the uttermost fled,
But divine Helenus, the seer discreet,
Hector and brave Æneas did retiring meet.

9

“O Hector and Æneas,” thus he cried,
“Since on you most doth Lycia lean and Troy,
Our best men still to fight or to provide,
Stand by the gates, and every shift employ
These to drive backward, ere, to foes a joy,
Weak in the women’s arms they flying fall.
This done, though toil unutterable destroy
Our strength and fire, yet, for such need doth call,
Here will we hold at bay the rushing Danaans all.

10

“But, Hector, to the town *thy* course direct,
And to thy mother and mine this precept tell,
That all her aged women she collect
At Pallas’ temple on the citadel,
There open with her key the sacred cell,
And from the raiment, stored her house within,
The largest robe and loveliest, hoarded well,
Bring with her to the fane, and lay therein,
Covering the knees divine, some tender grace to win.

11

“And at the shrine twelve yearlings bid her vow,
Ungoaded heifers, if Athene deign
Our wives and little ones to feel for, now,
And from divine Troy Tydeus’ son restrain,
Wild in the war, out-breathing fears and pain,
Whom of Achaians I far strongest deem :
Not Peleus’ son such dire alarms could rain,
Though born of heavenly mother, as they dream.
This one, beyond all bound, raves everywhere supreme.”

12

He spake ; and by his brother's word stood fast
Hector in all things. From his car he sprang,
And, both spears waving, through the army passed,
Shoring the fight ; the gathering war-cry rang.
They rallying wheeled, there facing with dire clang
The Achaians in mid swoop. These, sore bested,
Pause in their bloody work, and backward hang.
' One of the deathless from on high,' they said,
' Hath come to succour Troy.' So well that rallying sped.

13

Loud to his army shouted Hector then :
" Hear now, bold Trojans and far-famed allies,
Mind the shrill battle, O my friends, be men,
While to the town I pass, and there advise
Our women, and old men in council wise,
To sue the gods with prayer, and offerings yield."
This spoken, Hector to the town then hies.
Hard on him smote, he moving from the field,
Ankles and neck, the rim of his black-hided shield.

14

Then Glaucus, of Hippolochus the son,
And Diomedes, each for glory athirst,
Met in the midway pass. They nearing on,
Cried the far-shouting Diomedes first :
" Who then and whence art *thou*, that idly durst
Cross me in arms ? I never saw thy face
Before in fight, yet now behold thee burst
Flaming with valour, and thy peers outrace,
By destiny reserved my shadowing lance to grace.

15

“ Who with me fight, of wretched parents they !
But if from heaven thou art, I would not wrong
The eternal gods, nor meet them in the fray.
No, for not Dryas’ son, Lycurgus strong,
Who the divine ones fought, on earth lived long.
He the nurse-nymphs of Dionysus scared
Down the Nyseian steep, and the wild throng
Their ritual things cast off, and maddening fared,
Torn with his goad, like kine ; so vast a crime he dared.

16

“ Yea Dionysus, such a sight was there,
Himself in fear sank down beneath the seas,
And Thetis in her breast him quailing bare,
At the man’s cry such trembling shook his knees.
Then angered were the gods who live at ease,
And Zeus smote blind Lycurgus, and he fell
Loathed ere his day. Nor will I thus displease
The gods of heaven : but if with men thou dwell,
Whom the earth feeds, come near, and find the jaws of hell.”

17

Answered the noble Glaucus from his car :
“ Brave son of Tydeus, wherefore set thy mind
My race to know ? The generations are,
As of the leaves, so also of mankind.
As the leaves fall, now withering in the wind,
And others are put forth, and spring descends,
Such on the earth the race of men we find ;
Each in his order a set time attends ;
One generation rises, and another ends.

18

“ Yet notwithstanding if thou still demand
My lineage, hear ! men know it far and wide.
In Ephyra long since, in Argos land,
Did Sisyphus Æolides abide,
Who all the inhabitants of earth outvied
In shrewd wit. And to him was born a son
Glaucus, of whom in turn his noble bride
Conceived and bare blameless Bellerophon,
Who with god-gifted mien in loveliest manhood shone.

19

“ But Prætus to destroy him subtly planned,
And in his power (for Zeus the Argives tamed
Under his sceptre) drave him from the land.
For queen Anteia, wife of Prætus, aimed
At secret joys, by maddening lust inflamed,
Nor could she the right-souled Bellerophon
Seduce thereto : then lying words she framed :
‘ Prætus, go die ! or slay me Glaucus’ son,
Who to his arms me loth would violently have won.’

20

“ She spake ; and fiercely was the king thereat
Enraged, yet, loth Bellerophon to kill,
For in his soul he was afraid of that,
To Lycia sent him, bearing ciphers ill,
Scored on a tablet with life-murdering skill,
And bade him these to the queen’s father show.
So he to Lycia went by the gods’ will,
And to the land where Xanthus stream doth flow.
Him received Lycia’s king right honourably, I trow.

21

" Nine days he feasted him, and oxen nine
Killed; but when now the tenth morn came in view,
Then he enquired, and asked to see the sign,
And the fell death-mark of his kinsman knew.
So first he bade him a sore plague subdue,
Chimæra, of divine, not human, birth.
He, trusting signs from heaven, that monster slew,
Flame-breathing, like a lion of the earth
Faced, a foul snake behind, a wild goat in the girth.

22

" Next with the noble Solymi he fought.
Far the most stubborn was that fight, he said,
Of all that ever with mankind he wrought.
Third, he the man-like Amazons smote dead.
On his return the king new dangers spread,
And planted in his path a secret train,
Picked men of Lycia, to dark ambush led.
But no man of their troop came home again:
All by the blameless knight Bellerophon were slain.

23

" So the king, certain of his heavenly race,
Gave him his child to wife, and to the height
Of half his kingly honour did him grace.
The Lycians cut, for his own use and right,
Fair land, some tilth, some vineyards of delight.
She to Bellerophon three children bare,
Isander, and Hippolochus, and bright
Laodamia, who Zeus' bed did share,
And the divine brass-helmed Sarpedon to him bare.

24

"But when he too displeased the gods at last,
In the Aleïan desert, as they tell,
Eating his own heart, up and down he passed,
And the lone fields pursued where no men dwell.
Isander by invincible Ares fell,
While with the Solymi he warred in vain.
As for Laodamia, loved so well,
She by the goddess of the golden rein,
Fair Artemis, in anger was cut off and slain.

25

"I from Hippolochus myself am sprung,
He is my father, I his offspring dear.
To Troy he sent me, when I yet was young,
And oft this charge repeated in my ear,
Still to be first, and others overpeer,
Nor the divine roll of my fathers shame,
Who aye in Ephyra and Lycia were
Far the most honourable in name and fame;
Thence I derive my blood, such lordly birth I claim."

26

He spake; and Diomedè rejoiced in heart,
Stuck spear in earth, and softly him addressed:
"Thou from of old my lineal guest-friend art.
Once Ceneus held Bellerophon his guest
Twenty whole days, and gave him of the best;
And each in parting proffered love-gifts rare,
Ceneus a zone with shining grain imprest,
Bellerophon a rich cup, passing fair,
Pure gold—this, when I sailed, I left behind me there.

27

“ But Tydeus I no more remember well,
For I was left a little child when he
In Thebè with so many Achaïans fell.
So now in Argos I am host to thee,
Thou mine in Lycia, when their land I see.
Cross we not arms, however deep the fray.
Troy and the tribes yield foes enough for me,
Whom the gods bring me, whom I hunt to bay;
Also for thee the Achaïans, to kill whom thou may.

28

“ But let us now change arms, that all men here
Our lineal friendship may both mark and heed.”
Each from his car then hastened, and came near;
They, hand in hand, swore loyal troth at need.
Lo, then was Glaucus both in mind and deed
Robbed of his wits by Kronos’ son divine,
To change arms with illustrious Diomede.
Thus gold for brass it pleased him to resign,
Arms worth a hundred oxen for the worth of nine.

29

Now by the western gates and spreading beech
Round Hector ran Troy’s women, wife and maid,
Of husband, brother, son enquiring each.
Charge on them all of vows and prayer he laid,
For many were the souls by doom o’erweighed.
Last he arrived at Priam’s mansion fair,
Built up with many a shining colonnade.
Also within it fifty chambers were,
Near one another built, of polished marble rare.

30

Here with their wedded wives slept Priam's sons,
And for his daughters on the other side
Lay twelve roofed chambers, built of polished stones,
One near another, in the courtyard wide,
Wherein at night, each with his beauteous bride,
Slept the king's sons-in-law. Now Hector there
Met the queen leading from the further side
Laodicè her child, of all most fair.
Clasping his hand, his mother did her mind declare :

31

"Why, darling, from the battle art thou come?
Ah! the abhorred Achaians grind you sore
Outside the walls: thy heart hath sent thee home,
In the Acropolis high Zeus to adore.
Stay, till I bring wine: to the gods then pour
First, and the Sire who good and evil sends:
After, drink thou, and thine own health restore:
Wine to a worn-out man great courage lends,
Worn as thyself art now, in fighting for thy friends."

32

And the large white-plumed Hector answering spake:
"Lift not, dear mother, to my lips this day
Wine, the sweet soother, lest my limbs it break,
And I forget war, and my heart decay.
Nor to Zeus dare I the dark wine display,
Smeared as I am. It were an awful stain
Thus to Kronion with red hands to pray.
But go thou, and collect thine aged train,
And pass with gifts of burning to Athene's fane."

33

"And a choice robe, thy largest, fairest yet
Stored in the house, and to thyself most dear,
That on the knees of bright-haired Pallas set.
And twelve ungoaded heifers, of one year,
Vow, if in pity she consent to hear,
And save our little children and our wives,
And to keep off the son of Tydeus' spear
From sacred Troy, so wildly he now drives,
Rolling dismay before him, and devouring lives.

34

"Go therefore thou, and worship in her fane
Athene, Lady of spoil ; and I will seek
Paris my brother, if perchance he deign
To heed me when I call, and hear me speak.
O would earth swallow him up, and yawning wreak
Mischief on him who bitter mischief bred
For Priam and his line, no dastards weak !
Him could I see go down to Hades dead,
Then would I say that sorrow from my soul had fled."

35

Then the queen passed, and called her maids ; and they
All through the town the aged women sought.
She to the fragrant chamber went, where lay
Robes of Sidonian web, in colours wrought,
By Paris overseas from Sidon brought,
That time when he took Helen. Far the best
She for Athene chose with ready thought,
Bright like a star, and laid below the rest.
Then round her, passing forth, the aged women pressed.

36

When at Athene's temple they arrived,
Opened to them the doors Theano fair,
Daughter of Kisseus, whom Antenor wived ;
For her the Trojans had made priestess there.
Then with a cry they lifted all in prayer
Their hands up to Athene. And she laid
The bright robe on the knees, Theano fair,
Knees of Athene gloriously arrayed ;
And to the child of Zeus with sacred vows she prayed :

37

" O saviour of the city, queen divine,
Athene, break and shiver, I implore,
The spear of Diomedé ; and him consign
Headlong to fall the western gates before !
Then we the blood will at thine altar pour
From twelve ungoaded heifers, of one year,
If to the Trojans thou their strength restore,
And save their wives and little children dear."
Thus in her prayer she spake, but Pallas would not hear.

38

Hector meanwhile to Paris bent his way,
To the fair house which Paris builded well,
With the most cunning craftsmen of that day
In Troy's rich land, high on the citadel,
With main hall, court, and bower, therein to dwell,
Hard by the house of Priam, and Hector's own.
There he passed in. His spear-shaft many an ell
Stretched out before him, and a dread light shone,
Flashed from the brazen point and golden ring thereon.

39

He in the chamber Alexander found
Handling his arms, shield, cuirass, helm, and bow.
There too sat Helen with her maids around,
And gave them tasks. Him Hector branded so :
" Friend, 'tis not good to let thy wrath o'erflow.
Our men now wither away ; yet thine own deed
Kindled the flame ; nor would thy hand be slow
To thwart another that should fail at need.
Up, lest the fire ere long on this our city feed."

40

Then did the godlike Alexander say :
" Hector, I yield me ; thy reproof is right.
Yet not for anger do I sit this day
Here in my chamber, nor so much for spite,
But to take ease with sorrow. Me to fight
My wife draws, and I feel that it were best.
There is a tide in war, black days and white.
But tarry awhile till I in arms be drest ;
Or go first ; nor behind thee shall my feet long rest."

41

He spake : but white-plumed Hector silent stood,
And bitter musings in his own heart nursed.
But Helen spake to him in tenderest mood :
" Brother of me the abominable, accurst !
Would that from heaven a sweeping storm had burst,
And wrapt me away for ever to the hills,
In that day when my mother bore me first,
Or, where the wave roars and the hurricane shrills,
Had in the deep waste drowned me, ere I bred these ills !

42

“ But since the gods ordained them, why not then
Give me a husband better and more fit ?
That knew shame, and the burning tongues of men ?
This hath not, will have never, a sound wit,
And he will reap his folly. But now sit
On this chair, O my brother, for our crime
Hath most thy soul to ceaseless sorrow knit ;
And now with him I to such misery climb,
Men shall make songs upon us in the after-time.”

43

But Hector answered : “ Me no more persuade,
Helen, albeit in love : it may not be.
Sore the men miss me, whom I yearn to aid.
But thou, and his own heart, drive after me
Him ; there is yet time—for I go to see
My servants, my dear wife, my tender boy.
For I know nothing, if the road be free
Hereafter to return to them in joy,
Or by Achaian hands the gods my life destroy.”

44

So Hector spake, and to his own house went,
Nor found white-armed Andromache therein.
She with her child and nurse in sore lament
Stood weeping on the walls, and he within
Asked of the maidens : “ Let me quickly win
News by which way my wife went from the hall.
Passed she to some one of her fair-robed kin,
Or to Athene's temple, where be all
Troy's daughters, who with vows on the dread goddess call ?”

45

Then said the careful house-dame : "Thou shalt win,
Hector, true news, and quickly. From our hall
Not unto any of her fair-robed kin,
Nor to Athene's fane she went, where all
Troy's daughters be, and the dread goddess call.
But, hearing of Troy crushed and Argos glad,
She went forth to the tower upon the wall.
She rushed out like a woman that is mad,
Full speed, to that great tower : both child and nurse she had."

46

When Hector heard that, to the western gates,
Meaning that way to pass forth to the plain,
He sped back quickly through the long wide streets.
And lo ! his dear wife ran to meet him fain,
Child of Eëtion, who held high reign
Over Cilician men, in Thebes afar,
'Neath woody Placos—she, and in her train
A young nurse and a babe, as babies are,
Hector's one child, their darling, like a lovely star.

47

Him Hector called Scamandrius, but the rest
Astyanax—thus honouring Hector's child ;
For Hector was alone Troy's stay confest,
And they "The City's King" his babe had styled.
He then, beholding the sweet infant, smiled
In silence : but Andromache there shed
Thick tears beside him, and in anguish wild
Clasped Hector by the hand, and spake, and said,
"Dear one, thine own brave temper will yet lay thee dead."

48

"Thou hast no pity for thy child or me,
Ere long thy widow, when the Achaian men
Shall like a flood pour round, and murder thee.
I tell thee it were better for me then
Dark earth to enter, if that day come when,
Light of my eyes, I lose thee. For no cheer,
No comfort ever can I find again,
But wailings in the night, and anguish drear,
When for thine arms I feel, and thou art nowhere near.

49

"No parents have I now. Achilleus slew
My father, when he came to raze and blot
Cilician Thebè, and with doom o'erthrew
My father's people, and much plunder got.
Eëtion he slew there, but stript him not:
Awe was upon him, and his heart was bound.
But with his gilded arms in that same spot
He burned him, piling o'er his bones a mound;
And the hill-nymphs, Zeus' children, planted elms around.

50

"And brethren I had seven, within our hall;
In one day did their light go down and cease;
Swift-foot divine Achilleus slew them all,
Mid their slow kine and sheep of silver fleece.
As for my mother, who in days of peace
'Neath woody Placos shared my father's sway,
Her, with the spoil brought thence, did he release
For countless ransom: but before her day
By Artemis' keen arrows she was taken away.

51

“ O Hector, thou to me art mother dear,
And father, brother, husband of my life.
Have pity! on the tower abide thou here :
Leave not an orphan child, a widowed wife.
Near the wild figs, where footing is most rife,
Stand : for by that way came their bravest on
Thrice, with the two Aiantes, wild in strife,
Idomeneus, the Atridæ, Tydeus’ son,
Whether by seer advised, or by their own heart won.”

52

And the large white-plumed Hector answered then :
“ All this I knew; ’twas mine own heart’s appeal ;
But scorn unutterable from Trojan men
And long-robed Trojan women I fear to feel,
If like a dastard from the fight I steal.
No, for my soul I cannot. I have learned
Still to be foremost for my country’s weal,
Nor ever from the van my feet I turned ;
Thus for my sire large fame, and for myself have earned.

53

“ For the day comes, I know it, and the hour
Comes, it will come, when sacred Troy shall fall,
And Priam, and his people, and his power.
Yet not that sorrow of the Trojans all
Hereafter, when in vain my help they call,
Nor even of Hecuba, nor Priam king,
Nor of my brothers, whom, so many and tall,
Their foes ill-minded to the dust shall bring,
Slain with the sword, my breast so bitterly can wring—

54

“Not these, nor all griefs on my heart so weigh,
As thine, when some one of the Achaian band
Robs thee for ever of thy freedom’s day,
And bears thee weeping to an alien land.
Lo, then in Argos shalt thou set thine hand
To weave thy stern task at another’s loom,
Or at Messeïs and Hyperia stand
With pail or pitcher, and thy heart consume,
Struggling reluctant much, yet conquered by strong doom.

55

“Then some one may behold thy tears, and say,
‘See now the wife of Hector whom we knew
First of war-captains in his country’s day,
Ere we the towers of Ilion overthrew.’
So will he speak, and thou shalt wail anew
For anguish, and sore need of one like me,
Thy life to shield, thy slavery to undo.
But let the mounded earth my covering be,
Ere of thy cries I hear, and fierce hands laid on thee!”

56

Then with his arms spread forth did Hector lean
Toward his fair babe, who to the nurse’s breast
Clung with a cry, scared at his father’s mien,
And at the brazen helm, so grimly drest,
Waving aloft the long white horsehair crest.
Both parents laughed; and Hector from his brow
Laid the helm shining on the earth, then pressed
Fondly, now dandled in his arms, and now
Kissed his dear child, and spake to all the gods his vow:

57

“Zeus, and all gods, let this my child attain
Praise in the host of Troia, even as I,
In strength so good, and full of power to reign;
And when he comes from battle, let men cry
‘He far excels his father,’ and on high
Spoils let him bear with foeman’s gore defiled,
And his dear mother’s heart make glad thereby.”
He spake, and in his wife’s arms laid the child,
Who to her pure breast clasped him, as in tears she smiled.

58

Her lovingly he touched, and pitying said:
“Dearest, be not too heavy and undone;
For no man against fate can send me dead
To Hades, and his hour can no man shun,
None bad or good, since earth was peopled—none.
But now go home, and to thine own works see,
Distaff and loom, and keep thy house at one.
This business of the war men’s care shall be,
Who dwell here in the land, and most of all to me.”

59

Thus Hector spake, and from the earth uptook
The bright helm, and his dear wife, homeward bound,
Passed through the city, turning oft to look,
And wept as she went up. Ere long she found
Her maidens many in the halls renowned
Of Hector, and stirred up the funeral strain.
So Hector yet alive they wailed around
His own hearth; for no hope did yet remain
That he from that sore battle would return again.

60

Nor lingered Paris : to the field he sped
With bright arms, glorying in his airy feet.
As when a stalled horse, high with barley fed,
Breaks tether, and spurning the wide plain runs fleet,
Down the familiar river to bathe his heat :
High the head towers, and in his eager race
The long mane dashes from his neck to meet
Whistling the air : he, glorying in his grace,
Flies to the pasturing herd with limber knees apace ;

61

So now the king's son Paris from the hold
Of sacred Troia toward the plain below,
Sun-like in arms aflame with brass and gold,
Went proudly exulting, nor his feet were slow.
Soon did he find his brother, in act to go
From where his dear wife he had seen and heard.
There exclaimed godlike Paris : " Sir, I trow
Too long by far have I my steps deferred,
Nor here in season came according to thy word ! "

62

And the large white-plumed Hector answering spake :
" Friend, thou art brave : no lover of fair play
Can slur thy works in war ; but thou art slack
Of set will ; and my heart grieves day by day,
Hearing what things of thee the Trojans say,
Who toil much for thy sake. But now to fight.
All will be well hereafter, when we lay,
If Zeus will, Freedom's bowl in the gods' sight,
When from Troy's land we chase the Achaian soldiers quite."



BOOK VII.

1

THUS having spoken, from the gates forth swept
Illustrious Hector, and with eager stride
Near him the godlike Alexander stept,
Both on the leap to take the battle's tide.
As when the god for sailors doth provide
A fair wind at their need, who night and day
The broad sea-plain with polished oars have plied,
Till, by sheer toil unstrung, their knees give way ;
So to Troy's host appeared, at sore need welcome, they.

2

One slew Menesthius who in Arna dwelt ;
Him to club-wielding Areïthotüs bare
The full-eyed Phylomedusa. Hector dealt
Sharp wound on Eïones with deadly spear,
Mid neck, beneath the casque, and quelled him there.
Glaucus, the Lycian captain, his spear-head
Sunk in Iphinoüs' shoulder, in career
Of hot fight, mounting his swift mares. He, dead,
Fell ruining to the earth ; his soul to Hades fled.

3

But when the fierce-eyed goddess now discerned
Her Argives bloodily falling in the fight,
Then Troyward, to the walls divine, she turned,
Down from the hills of heaven, her rushing flight.
Whom marked Apollo from the sacred height
Whence his eye wandered, the long field to reach,
While he for Troy wished victory in the fight ;
And forth he passed : they met beside the beech,
And to her first Apollo, child of Zeus, made speech :

4

“ Why the swift air, divine one, dost thou ride
From heaven, the angel of what mighty thought ?
Is it the hovering victory to decide
Against the Trojans, whom thou pitiest nought ?
Far better, if by me thou wouldst be taught,
If the dread battle we made pause to-day,
And Ilion's fate were to the touchstone brought
Hereafter—since I know that, come what may,
Fair ones of heaven, in dust this city ye will lay.”

5

Stern-eyed Athene answer made thereto :
“ Archer of heaven, this counsel was my own.
So let it be. What therefore wilt thou do
To lay this tumult, that so fierce hath grown ?”
Then he : “ If Hector now, he only alone,
Horse-taming Hector, would some Danaan call,
Him singly to o'erthrow, or be o'erthrown,
I think the Argives would consent withal,
And send with zeal their man, to conquer or to fall.”

6

Thus they conferred : but Helenus, Priam's son,
That scheme, which pleased them, in his heart divined,
And beside Hector stood, and thus begun :
“ Hector, my brother, peer to Zeus in mind,
Hear me ; I am thy blood—bid Argos find
Some champion good to meet thyself alone,
Then fight it out, and let these fall behind ;
Not yet thy doom is to be overthrown ;
So the everlasting voices I have heard and known.”

7

Then Hector was exceeding glad thereat,
And, the mid spear-shaft in his hand, he went,
And shoaled the Trojans back ; and they all sat.
And Agamemnon wrought with like intent.
On the high beech of Zeus, to watch the event,
Apollo, master of the silver bow,
Sat by Athene, like with talons bent
Two birds of ravin, and with eye not slow
Both glorying in their men gazed on the plain below.

8

There sat the long ranks, in close order prest,
Bristling with helm and shield and serried spear.
As when a rising shiver from the west
Spreads a rough shade, and darkens the blue mere,
Such in the plain their seated ranks appear.
And Hector in the midst uprose and spake :
“ O Trojans and well-greaved Achaians, hear,
While to you all my bosom-thought I break ;
For why should all this people die for one man's sake ?

9

"High-thronèd Zeus our oath did not fulfil,
But trouble to us all doth still decree,
Till either against Troy you reap your will,
Or by the ships your own selves vanquished be.
Here of the whole Achaian host I see
Chiefs : whomsoever his own heart doth call
Now singly to stand forth, and fight with me,
Let him step forward from among you all,
And divine Hector meet, to conquer or to fall.

10

"This too I say, (let Zeus our witness stand!) :
If with fell brass that champion me destroy,
These arms, the lawful spoil of his right hand,
Hence let him carry to the ships in joy,
But me send home, that men and wives of Troy
May for my corse the rites of fire ordain :
And if he fall, I then to sacred Troy
Will bear arms won, when I have stript the slain,
And hang them on the wall of great Apollo's fane;

11

"But to the camp will I your dead resign,
That the long-haired Achaians may bestow
Full rites, and heap a monumental sign
Where the broad waves of Hellespontus flow.
And this shall be the word with high and low
Hereafter, when they sail the wine-dark main :
'Behold a man's grave, who died long ago,
Chief in desert of arms, by Hector slain.'
Thus will men speak, and never shall my glory wane."

12

He ended ; but they all in silence sat,
Loth to accept, yet to refuse ashamed,
Till Menelaus, groaning sore thereat,
Rose up with indignation, and exclaimed :
“ O women, and not men, how direly blamed
For ever if none durst with Hector vie !
Now may ye all, inglorious and unnamed,
Turn here to earth and water ! I, even I
Will meet him : victory's doom is with the gods on high.”

13

Thus having said, his bright arms he put on.
Soon, Menelaus, had thy deadliest harm
Come dealt by Hector, who thee far outshone,
But the Achaian chiefs rushed in alarm,
Yea, Agamemnon caught thee by the arm,
And cried : “ O brother, art thou mad ? No more
Rave in thy folly, but, though grieved, disarm,
Nor in unequal field thy life outpour,
With Hector, whom all here recoil from and abhor.

14

“ Shuddered to meet him in the glorious fight
Even Achilleus, better far than thou.
But sit here with thy friends till we incite
Some champion else, who, fresh and fearless now,
Mark me, will yet his spent knees gladly bow,
If from this awful field his life he bear.”
He spake : his brother did that rede allow ;
Him the glad servants soon unharness there ;
Rose Nestor in the midst, and did his mind declare :

15

" Falls a deep sorrow on the Achaian land.
How would that old man wail it, Peleus knight,
Staff of his people, and their good right hand,
Who in his own house made me oft recite,
Years long ago, and heard me with delight,
Tales of the Argives, and each line and race !
Whom could he hear of, cowed by Hector's might,
Then would he lift his dear hands, and of grace
Pray that his soul to Hades might go down apace.

16

" O Father Zeus, Athene, and Apollo,
Had I such youth as when Arcadia fought
With Pylos (around Pheia's walls, where follow
Streams of Iardan their fleet course), and brought
Their champion, godlike Ereuthalion, fraught
With the great arms of Areïthous king,
Whom men and fair-zoned women their children taught
To call ' Club-wielder,' for his strength did spring
Neither from spear nor bow, but iron club's dire swing !

17

" By craft, not valour, where no more availed
His iron club, within a pent-up way,
Lycurgus with a spear his reins impaled,
Then spoiled him, and his arms in after day,
Stern Ares' gift, himself bore in the fray.
But when Lycurgus in his halls waxed old,
To Ereuthalion the dead chief's array
Was by his dear lord given, to have and hold.
He summoned, in these arms, our best with challenge bold.

18

“Then all with strong fear quailed, and would not dare ;
But the brave temper of my heart me drew
To fight, albeit I was youngest there.
So by Athene’s power, who bare me through,
That man, their tallest and most fierce, I slew,
While in the field exhausted lay the rest—
Had I that prime now, and a strength so true,
Hector would find his match ! But ye, our best,
Hang from the work, nor meet this champion with full zest.”

19

He ended, and these nine arose with speed :
First Agamemnon, king of land and seas,
Upleapt, and then strong-hearted Diomedé ;
Anon the Aiantes rose, and knit their knees ;
And next Idomeneus, and Mériones,
His comrade, peer to dreadful Ares he ;
Then bright Eurypylus ; Thoas after these,
Andræmon’s child, and of divine degree
Odysseus. Each now willed brave Hector’s match to be.

20

Then out spake Nestor, the Gerenian knight :
“Shake now the lots ; for whoso wins will bear
Much profit to the Achæians, and requite
His own heart also, if he safely fare.”
He spake : and each his own lot, marked with care,
Did in the helm of Agamemnon fling.
And, with hands lifted to the gods in prayer,
Each gazed on the broad heaven, and said this thing :
“O Zeus, let Aias win, or Diomedé, or the King !”

21

Then Nestor shook, and their own choice outleapt,
The lot of Aias. And the herald passed
From left to right, and showed it as he stept :
And each in turn disowned it. When at last
He the man reached, as down the ranks he passed,
Who marked and threw it, Aias nobly famed,
In the chief's hand, outstretched, the lot he cast,
Who knew it and was glad, with zeal inflamed.
There at his feet to earth he flung it, and exclaimed :

22

" O friends, the lot is mine ! and I with you
Joy for the hope that Hector falls to-day.
Till, then, with harness I my limbs endue,
Ye the meanwhile to Zeus Kronion pray,
Dumb, lest the Trojans hearken what ye say ;
Or even aloud ; whom fear we on the earth ?
No strength or valour shall me scare away,
No skill defeat me—not so poor of worth
I boast my rearing-up in Salamis, and my birth."

23

Thus Aias spake ; and to Kronion dread,
With eyes uplifted to the ample sky,
Prayed from one heart the people, and each said :—
" Thou who from Ida rulest mightily,
O Father Zeus, most glorious, great, and high,
Speed Aias now, and shine upon our prayer :
But Hector if thou lovest, then lay by
Deeds equal for them both, and fame as fair !"
They ceased. In flashing mail Aias was arming there.

24

Soon all in harness was he wrapt, and then
Rushed to the work, like Ares at full height,
When to the field he marches among men
Cast by Kronion in the fangs of fight ;
Such Aias moved, gigantic in their sight,
Smiling with brows of thunder, as he swung
The gaunt spear, gleaming at each stride of might ;
And on his mien with joy the Argives hung,
But tremblings and alarm the Trojan knees unstrung.

25

Yea, even Hector's heart within his breast
Knocked at the ribs, yet could he nowise cower,
Nor with faint purpose break from his own quest.
Anon before him he sees Aias lower,
With huge seven-hided shield, a brazen tower,
By Tychius built, that craftsman matched by none,
From Hyla. He seven bulls of breed and power
Flayed for that limber shield ; and like a sun
Hammered an eighth hard layer of beaming brass thereon.

26

This Telamonian Aias bare, and now
By Hector stood, and threatening thus began :
" Learn wilt thou soon, bold Hector, even thou,
Who be the Danaan chiefs, and what they can,
Aye though Achilles, lion-hearted man,
Stand not among us. By the fleet he lies,
Holding great Agamemnon under ban.
But many of *us* can look thee in the eyes,
And foot to foot strike home : thyself to war advise."

27

And the large white-plumed Hector answering spake :
" O divine Aias, Telamonian king,
Boast not, nor me for some poor child mistake,
Or girl, to whom wild war is a new thing.
Swords and the yells of men no terror bring,
No pause to me ; I know them from of old.
Now right, now left, my buckler can I swing,
Charge on the chariots in confusion rolled,
Or toil in standing fight, and to the music hold.

28

" Look to thyself ! I care not to hit thee,
Such as thou art, by any sleight concealed :
So rather, if I can, that all may see."
So saying, his mighty wrist he backward wheeled,
And flung the spear in the seven-hided shield
Of Aias, on that layer, the eighth and last,
Of brazen metal flaming in the field.
Onward the irresistible spear-head passed ;
Through the six hides it clave, but in the seventh stuck fast.

29

Then divine Aias hurled his massy spear,
And hit the orbèd shield of Priam's son.
Clean through the shining orb clave the strong spear,
And past the elaborate hauberk went right on,
And by the flank the tunic tore anon.
But Hector, writhing, slipt the mortal blow.
And now, with spears tugged forth, they close in one,
As two wild boars together grappling go,
Or like raw-feeding lions that with rage o'erflow.

30

Hector the mid shield smote, nor brake the brass,
For the barb curled. Then Aias also bore
With firm point on the targe, and made it pass,
And gashed the neck : then spouted the red gore.
Nor white-plumed Hector yet the fight gave o'er,
But seized a stone there lying on the field,
Black, huge, and rough, and with it smote full sore
The round boss of the huge seven-hided shield
Of Aias, direly smote, and the divine brass pealed.

31

But Aias in return a stone more large
Snatched from the ground, and whirled it with dire aim,
In strength immeasurable, and brake the targe
As with a mill-stone, and the knees did lame
Of Hector. Crushed beneath the targe he came
Flat to the earth ; but Phœbus reared him. Then
With grim swords had they plied their deadly game,
But that the heralds, who serve Zeus and men,
Came, Trojan and Achaian, ere they closed again.

32

Here stood Talthybius, and Idæus there,
And midway between both their sceptres laid,
While he, the wise Idæus, spake them fair :
“ No longer, O my sons, though undismayed,
Each against other this fell strife invade.
Zeus, the cloud-driving Father, holds right dear
Both : and ye both ply well the warrior's trade.
That know we all ; but now the night draws near,
And it is good the summons of dark night to hear.”

33

Then Aias said : " Bid Hector first decide,
O herald, for he challenged all our best ;
And gladly I will follow, if he guide."
And the large white-plumed Hector him addressed :
" Aias, with size and power and prudence blest,
And by God's will most glorious with the spear,
Hold for to-day : hereafter we will test
Which shall prevail ; but now the night draws near.
And it is good the summons of dark night to hear.

34

" So to the men of Argos shalt thou bring,
And to thy clansmen and thy friends, much joy ;
And I will seek the town of Priam king,
And cheer the men and long-robed women of Troy,
Who to the gods will holy rites employ.
But let us now change gifts, that men may tell
Hereafter both in Argos and in Troy :
' These with fierce soul to bitter combat fell,
But from the field they passed like friends united well. ' "

35

So saying, a silvered brand with sheath he gave
And rich strap. Aias gave his belt renowned,
Shining with purple. Then the champions brave
Went each his way. Much joy the Trojans found,
When Hector they beheld alive and sound,
Safe from the hands of Aias. Him they bring
Glad to the town, past hope with fortune crowned ;
While with proud heart, elate on victory's wing,
Aias the Danaans lead to Agamemnon king.

36

So to the king's hut; and to Zeus on high
A fine bull, five years old, Atreides slew:
Anon they flayed him, and right dexterously
Turned him about, and slashed him through and through,
Then deftly sliced him up in pieces due,
And on the pointed spits their morsels set.
These, at the fire soon roasted, off they drew.
So, when their toil was done, to feast they get;
And not a guest there found had less than his fair debt.

37

There with the whole length of the cloven chine
Imperial Agamemnon, king of men,
Graced Aias above all. But when for wine
And food no longer their souls lusted, then
The old man turned to weaving schemes again,
Nestor, whose rede before did best appear.
He with goodwill rose, and harangued them then:
"O Agamemnon, son of Atreus, hear,
And ye the Achaian chieftains hearken and give ear!

38

"Of the long-haired Achaians many are dead,
Their dark blood mingled with Scamander's flow,
And their heroic souls to Hades fled.
Therefore command at morning to forego
The war-shout and the war, that we may so
With mules and oxen hither wheel the slain,
And burn them near the ships, that men may show
The ashes to their children, if the main
Homeward we sail, and reach our native land again.

39

“Then will we rear an indiscriminate mound,
One large heap from the plain, the pyre about,
And plant a tier of lofty towers around,
Shelter for barks and men, then portals stout
Build, that the chariots may drive in and out ;
And a deep trench, to hold the storm afar
On days of battle, will we dig without,
That neither steed nor man the circling bar
Pass over, lest our work the Trojans scale and mar.”

40

So Nestor spake ; and all the kings agreed.
But in the Acropolis, at Priam's gate,
Council the Trojans held with panic speed,
And wise Antenor opened the debate :
“Trojans, Dardanians, and allies, now wait
In silence till I speak my inward thought.
Yield Argive Helen with her whole estate
Back to the sons of Atreus—for we fought
Against our oaths this day, and we are come to nought.”

41

This spoken, he sat down ; and godlike then,
Husband of bright-haired Helen, Paris rose,
And spake sharp answer mid the Trojan men :
“Not to my taste nor gain dost thou propose
Thy rede, Antenor. Something thy heart knows
Better than this. But if indeed of zeal
Thou speak it, heaven itself hath made thee lose
Thy wits. But wherefore should I now thus deal ?
I *will* not yield her up, to that I set my seal.

42

"But whatsoever in the bark I bore
From Argos, when to Troy she fled with me,
That will I readily in full restore,
And other add thereto." Thus answered he.
Then in the midst uprose in majesty
King Priam, to the gods in wisdom peer;
He with goodwill now spake advisedly :
"Trojans, Dardanians, and allies, give ear,
While with my lips I speak, and make my counsel clear.

43

"Eat now your meal as ye are wont to eat,
See to the guards, plant watches for the night,
And send Idæus to their camp and fleet
At morn, the sons of Atreus to invite
His word to hear, who set the feud alight,
And prudently enquire if war may cease
Till we the dead burn, and perform each rite.
Then let the war-shout and the war increase,
Till Fate decide our doom, and we at last find peace."

44

He spake, and gladly they obeyed, and ate.
With morning went Idæus to the coast,
And by the royal ship in full debate
Found and harangued the leaders of the host :
"O son of Atreus, and all ye that boast
Achaian kingship, Priam in his might,
And all that in Troy land are honoured most,
Bid me declare, if it to you seem right,
This, Alexander's word, who set the feud alight :

45

"What wealth in fleet barks from your land he drew—
Far better had he died than wrought that ill!—
All will he yield, and other add thereto.
But Helen to give back—he never will,
Never; and yet the Trojans urge it still.
This too they bid me ask, that war may cease
Till we the dead burn and each rite fulfil;
Then let the war-shout and the war increase,
Till Fate our doom decide, and we at last find peace."

46

He spake; but all the Achaian chiefs were dumb.
At last this word from Diomedes fell:
"Let now no gifts from Alexander come,
Nor take back Helen! Even a babe may tell
That Troy now trembles on the brink of hell."
He spake; and all the Achaians with a shout
Applauded, in their hearts admiring well
The word of Diomede, their champion stout.
And Agamemnon then before the host cried out:

47

"Idæus, sacred herald, this to thee,
Hear it thyself, the Achaians answer now;
And 'tis an answer that well pleaseth me.
But for the dead, I nothing disallow
Such with the rites of burning to endow.
Nor envy nor reserve follows the dead,
Once fallen, when beneath Fate's stroke they bow
But with the rites of fire they must be fed.
Let Zeus our witness stand, great lord of Hera's bed!

48

So saying, to all the gods he lifted high
The sceptre; and to Troy Idæus went.
There the whole people sat with eager eye,
Expecting, and the herald his way bent
Into the midst, and stood, and told the event.
All set to work: some wood to build the pyre
Sought far and near, and for the dead some went.
Also the Argives from their camp retire,
And some the dead seek out, some wood to build the pyre.

49

While in his march the Sun but newly yet
From the fair-flowing river of ocean deep
Hit slant the furrows, in the plain they met.
Hard was it to know each in that red heap;
But soon in water the grim wounds they steep,
And pile the dead, now cleansed, on wain and cart,
With tears: but Priam would not let them weep.
So they in silence pile, with grieving heart,
The dead men on the fire, and burn them, and depart.

50

So likewise the Achaians that same day,
Sore grieving, pile their dead with form and rite,
And burn them on the fire, and go their way.
And now when morning was not, but the light
Of grey dawn stealing on the doubtful night,
Of the Achaians came a chosen band,
Ere sleep from men's eyes had yet taken flight,
About the pyres, and from the loamy land
One indiscriminate mound shoal up with eager hand.

51

So the great mound rose looming from the plain ;
And with a wall they fenced it round about,
Then with a tier of towers the wall entrain,
Shelter for barks and men, and portals stout
Build, for the chariots to drive in and out ;
And a wide trench, to hold the storm aloof
On days of battle, they dug deep without,
Not to be cleared by steed of mortal hoof,
And in the midst set firm a palisade of proof.

52

So the long-haired Achaïans plied their toil.
But round the lord of lightning, where he sat
Throned in the heaven, the gods in high turmoil
Viewed how the brazen-mailed Achaïans gat
Their great work forward, and grieved sore thereat.
And the Earth-shaker in their midst began :
“ Lives there on yonder earth, spread far and flat,
O Zeus, one mortal of the race of man,
Who to the high gods yet will deign reveal his plan ?

53

“ Hast thou not seen the Achaïans at their task,
How they have walled a wall, to shield their fleet,
And round it driven a trench, and did not ask
Leave of the gods, nor burn the offerings meet ?
Now shall their fame walk far as morning's feet,
But my wall and Apollo's be forgot,
Which for Laomedon we toiled complete.”
Spake the cloud-driving Sire in anger hot :
“ Strong Shaker of the Earth, thou sayest I know not what.

54

"Fear in the other gods were not unmeet,
Who in their hands are feebler far than thou;
But still *thy* glory wide as morning's feet
Shall wander as of old. But rise up now,
And, when the Achaian keels the deep main plough
Homeward, upon their wall make ruinous breach,
Tear down and gulf it in the dark sea-slough,
And their foundations blot with the great beach,
That memory of their walls no more thy fame impeach."

55

Thus they conversed together, and the sun
Fell, and that work the Achaians ended there
Which in the grey dawn-twilight they begun.
Then they slew beeves, and ate their evening fare.
Now in the haven ships from Lemnos were,
Sent by Euneüs with a freight of wine,
(Him queen Hypsipyla to Jason bare),
And with a thousand measures of strong wine,
Sent for a several gift to Atreus' sons divine.

56

So the long-haired Achaians bought their wine
From Lemnos, some with brass, and some with steel,
And some with slaves, and some with skins, or kine.
Sat all night long the Achaians at their meal;
And Troy too feasted. But with many a peal
Of thunder all night long Zeus brooded woe.
They in pale fear to earth the red wine deal,
Nor durst a man drink, till libations flow
To the great Sire of all: and then to rest they go.



BOOK VIII.

1

DAWN in her saffron robe did earth o'ershine
When the great Thunderer, on the topmost peak
Of ridged Olympus, council held divine ;
And all in silence the gods hear him speak :
" Hearken all ye in heaven, strong powers and weak,
What now my soul doth in my breast advise.
I say let none, male god nor female, seek
My word to overthrow, my will despise.
But stand back, while I work my works as I think wise.

2

" And if one, stealing from my heavenly court,
Or Trojan help, or Danaan, he, I wis,
Shall come back beaten in no lovely sort ;
Or down the deepest of hell's dark abyss
Far will I hurl him from the realms of bliss,
To iron gates and brazen keep, so low
From Hades, as from earth heaven loftiest is.
Then will he feel how far my strength can go.
But if ye doubt, O gods, come try, that all may know.

3

“ Hang down from heaven to earth a golden chain,
And every god and goddess hold it fast,
Yet can ye never drag from sky to plain
Zeus, the supreme Lord, though your toil be vast.
But if my single hands to work I cast,
You lightly could I hale, with earth and sea,
Till round Olympus’ neck the cord I passed,
And all things in the air should floating be :
Thus men and gods I rule, and none can equal me.”

4

He ceased ; and all were silent with amaze,
Such were his words. At last Athene spake :
“ O Zeus, high monarch of immortal days,
This we know well, that none thy strength can break.
But now we sorrow for the Danaans’ sake,
Lest in full measure of sad fate they die.
As for the battle, we thy warning take,
Yet with advice will we the Argives ply,
Lest they be all wiped out, because thy wrath is high.”

5

Thus spake Athene. The cloud-driving Sire
Gave ear, and softly on her looked, and smiled,
And answered in his turn, and stilled his ire :
“ Take heart ! In anger against thee, dear child,
Nought will I utter, but would fain be mild.”
So saying, he yoked the steeds of golden mane,
Brass-hooved, and pacing with the tempest wild,
Then clad himself with gold, and seized the rein
And well-twined golden lash, and to the car leapt fain ;

6

Then scourged the horses, and they winged the air
Midway between the earth and starry sky,
And him to many-fountained Ida bare,
Womb of wild beasts, and to the summit high
Where his own grove and sacred altar lie.
Then the great Father stayed their flying feet,
And loosed them, and a mist spread far and nigh.
There on the height he glorying held his seat,
And viewed the city of Troy and the Achaian fleet.

7

But the long-haired Achaians now their meal
Took lightly in the camp, and armed with speed.
Also the Trojans arm with brass and steel,
Much fewer, and all on fire for warlike deed,
Not as of will, but driven by utmost need,
For wives and children. And now every gate
Flies open, and in hurrying stream succeed
Men on the leap to take the tide of Fate,
Horsemen alike and footmen, and the cry was great.

8

They coming to one place together dash
Spear, shield, and strength of heroes clad with mail.
Fierce with loud din the plated orbs they clash.
Earth runs a river of blood ; yell, shout, and wail
Blend echoing, as men perish or prevail.
While it was dawn, and sacred day yet grew,
So long the driving of their iron hail
Set heavy and heavier, and much people slew,
Till toward the midway vault the great Sun marching drew.

9

Then did the Father from his lofty throne
Hang forth the golden scales, and therein lay
Two fates of deadly bale, on each side one,
Argos and Troy, and raised the beam to weigh.
Then to the earth Achaia's dooming day
Sank, but the Trojan scale mounted to heaven.
And Zeus from Ida thundered, and away
Streamed on Achaia's files the burning levin,
And they fled sorely aghast, in fierce rout headlong driven.

10

Then neither Agamemnon durst abide,
Idomeneus, nor yet the Aiantes twain ;
Only Gerenian Nestor faced the tide,
Nor he desiring ; but his steed was slain,
Whom divine Paris hit where first the mane
Springs from the skull, and where the wound is death ;
And as the keen shaft sank into the brain
Once o'er the steeds he reared in dying breath,
And crazed them as he rolled about the brass in death.

11

While the old man was cutting rein and trace
Quick with his knife, still nearer and more near
The steeds of Hector galloped in wild chase,
And came on, bearing a bold charioteer,
Hector. And now the old man had died there,
But the far-shouting Diomedes knew,
And to Odysseus yelled along the air :
" Child of divine Laertes, dost thou too
Fly trembling back from battle with a cowardly crew ?

12

“Look to it now, lest some one in thy rear,
While in dismay thou hurriest from the fight,
Deep in thy midriff plant his brazen spear—
Stop, save from this wild warrior the old knight!”
Thus yelled he : but Odysseus in sore flight
Heard nor gave ear, but to the ships tore on.
And hard by Nestor, on the war’s full height,
Now stood the high-souled Diomede alone,
And hailed him in winged words, and spake in friendly tone:

13

“Old man, the young fresh warriors grind thee low;
Thy strength droops; hard old age thy bones doth mar;
Thy henchman is infirm, thy horses slow.
Now will I teach thee, only mount my car,
Chasing or chased what Troïan horses are,
Æneas’ own, my spoil, a breed of fire.
These to thy followers leave; we twain afar
Will dash mine on the battle, and rave with ire,
Till Hector even himself my gory spear admire.”

14

Thus did he speak, nor the Gerenian knight
Hearing obeyed not. And his followers twain
Eurymedon and Sthenelus from the fight
Drew the Nestorean steeds with tendance fain.
Then Diomedes on his car again
Sprang, and the old knight with him: and anon
Nestor in hand took fast the glittering rein,
And up the tumult lashed the horses on,
And full to Hector’s front right speedily they were gone.

15

Then Diomede in vain at Hector flung,
But Éniopeus, the reinsman, with his dart
He pierced beside the nipple, and down he rung,
And the fleet horses backward stammer and start.
Then Hector, covered with dark clouds in heart,
Yet left the dead, new reinsman to provide.
Neither were steeds and driver held apart
Long. Archeptolemus he soon descried,
Who to the car then mounted, the bright reins to guide.

16

Then were sore plagues, and wild despair of men,
And soon to Troy had they been shoaled like sheep ;
But high Zeus thundered, and a white flash then
Streamed to the plain, and thwarted the full sweep
Of the Æneïan horses, and wrung deep
Their nostrils with the stench and fire of hell.
They 'neath the car shrank huddling in a heap,
While from the hands of Nestor the reins fell,
And sorely aghast he quailed, and spake, advising well :

17

" Fly, son of Tydeus ! Canst thou not discern
Zeus hath departed from thee ? Zeus to-day
Shields Hector, and for him war's tide doth turn,
Which after shall be ours, if he says yea.
Zeus from his aim no power can wrest away.
Man, how supreme soever, is there but weak."
Then did far-shouting Diomedes say :
" All this, old man, dost thou in reason speak ;
Yet on my soul this fear doth bitter anguish wreak :

18

“For white-plumed Hector will vaunt loud in Troy,
‘Scared to the fleet by me Tydides came.’
Earth, open then thy mouth, and me destroy!”
Answered Gerenian Nestor: “It were shame,
Proud warrior, to dread this. Though Hector claim
To brand thee churl and coward, a thing of nought,
In Troy no soldier will believe the same,
Nor widows of the men thy hand hath taught,
Husbands in flower of youth by thee to Hades brought.”

19

Then he the steeds turned galloping to the rear,
And loud Troy rolled behind with deadlier hail,
Hector far shouting: “Son of Tydeus, hear!
Thee did the Danaan heroes high regale
With prime flesh, princelier cups, who now wilt fail
Of honour—in the mould of women nursed!
Vile dwarfing of the bower, come near and scale
Troy’s bulwark, and our women, if thou durst,
Hale to the fleet—not thou; for I will slay thee first.”

20

He spake; but Tydeus’ son was in sore doubt
The horses to wheel back and fight on still.
Thrice in his spirit was he torn about,
And thrice the Father pealed from Ida hill,
Sign to the Trojans of his firm goodwill.
And Hector shouted: “All ye ranks of Troy,
Be men, my friends, and grimly follow and kill!
Zeus to our part gives token of great joy
And victory and renown, but will the foe destroy.

21

"Fools for their daub of wall! It shall not stand;
Their trench my steeds can easily overleap.
But when the fleet I reach, bring fire to hand,
That timber alike and men from earth I sweep."
Then to his team in tender accents deep:
"Xanthus, and thou Podargus, Aithôn thou,
And divine Lampus, now repay your keep
Spread by Andromache, sweet corn enow,
Ere to my board, her husband's, she did food allow.

22

"But strain in tune together, and drive on,
That we may capture the Nestorean shield,
Whereof the glory up to heaven hath gone
That all of gold it is, both rings and shield,
And, from the Diomedean shoulders peeled,
Hephæstus' work, the glittering cuirass gain.
Win we but these two prizes in the field,
Large is my hope the Achaians will be fain
This night to steal on shipboard, and no more remain."

23

Thus did he vaunt. Great Hera, stung with fire,
Moved on her throne, and broad Olympus shook,
And the great god Poseidon hailed in ire:
"Shaker of Earth, wilt thou this ruin brook,
Theirs, who to Helicè and Ægæ took
Gifts fair and many, who were called thine own?
If all we now, to whom the Danaans look,
Would beat Troy, till the help were overthrown
Of high-voiced Zeus, in Ida he might fume alone!"

24

And the Earth-shaker in amaze replied :
" Thou wild of lip, what word is this from thee !
Not with my will Kronion be defied
By all us : he is mightier far than we !"
Thus they. Meanwhile that corner by the sea,
On from the deep-dug trench beside the tower,
Swarmed with the steeds and men of war, that he,
Hector the child of Priam, peer in power
With Ares, had cooped up, in that his glorious hour.

25

And now red fire had burned the ships ere night,
But, moved by Hera, Agamemnon planned,
Himself not loth, the Achaïans to incite.
So, with a purple robe in his right hand,
He climbed the central monster of the strand,
Odysseus' great black ship, both ways to shrill :
Here lay Achilleus moored, the last on land,
There Aias, glorying in his warlike will :
And he stood forth and cried, the Danaan ears to thrill :

26

" Shame on ye slaves, mere women and not men !
Where is the boast wherein we seemed so fine,
And all our empty vaunts in Lemnos then,
Where we devoured the flesh of straight-horned kine,
And crowned large goblets to the brim with wine,
That each in fight could singly stand and meet
Five score of Trojans or ten score in line ?
And now not all our strength can one defeat,
Hector, who soon with fire will burn our camp and fleet.

27

“ Zeus, didst thou ever with like doom impair
Kings of the earth, and their high glory abase ?
Never did I pass by thine altar fair
In well-benched bark, when sailing to this place,
But everywhere fat thighs before thy face
Burned, in desire to smite the walls of Troy.
But now, great Father, hearken of thy grace,
And grant that we at least our lives enjoy,
Nor leave the Trojans thus the Achaians to destroy ! ”

28

He ended ; and his tears and sad lament
The Father pitied, and was fain to spare
The people's lives. And from the clouds he sent
An eagle, monarch of the fowls of air,
And in his nails the fawn of a swift deer.
Hard by Zeus' altar he let drop the fawn,
Whence to the Lord of Voices they make prayer.
They, seeing that the bird his flight had drawn
From Zeus, now rallying rushed, and felt new courage dawn.

29

No Danaan of them all could then make boast
From Tydeus' son the vanward path to wrest,
In driving from the trench to feel the host.
First Agelaus of the shining crest
He slew, as flightward he the rein address.
Even as he turned, the spear behind him sang,
And through the midriff clave, from back to breast
Between his shoulders, the sharp brazen fang.
He from the car rolled headlong, and his harness rang.

30

Next after Tydeus' child came on with might
The imperial Lord of Argos and the seas,
And Menelaus shouting yells of fight,
And then the Aiantes twain with valiant knees,
And next Idomeneus and Mériones,
Equal to blood-stained Ares in the field,
And next Eurypylus. And after these
Came Teucer ninth, and curven bow did wield,
Standing on fence behind the Telamonian shield.

31

Aias the shield extended. Teucer then
Peered from behind, and with a shaft forth stept,
And slew one singled from the enemy's men ;
Then, as a child creeps to his mother, crept
To Aias, who the shield before him swept.
There first Orsilochns and Dætor fall,
Ormenus, Ophelestes much bewept,
Chromius, and yet three captains, eight in all ;
These like a swath of flowers he mowed down fair and tall.

32

And Agamemnon king of men was glad,
When blameless Teucer he saw dealing woe
From the great weapon, and came near and said :
" Brave Telamonian Teucer, aim on so,
And the lost field undarken with thy bow,
And shine to him who reared thee when a child,
Thy father, in his home, and let thee grow,
Albeit a bastard, and in love was mild :
Under his feet far off let now thy fame be piled !

33

“ And plainly in thy ears I now declare,
And by the promise will right firmly stand:
If the Lord Zeus, who doth the *Ægis* bear,
And wise *Athene* render to my hand
Troy with her walls, and let me wreck the land,
Thee with a gift of honour will I grace
Next to myself, a tripod fair and grand,
Two steeds and chariot, or divine of face
A woman, in thy couch hereafter to find place.”

34

Quickly the blameless *Teucer* made reply :
“ Drivest thou me, then, who in no wise cower,
O glorious son of *Atreus*? Know that I
Cease not to fight according to my power,
But, since to Troy we pushed them, from that hour
Lurk waiting to catch men. But now, behold,
Eight bearded arrows have I sent in shower
To pierce the flesh of warriors, and all told ;
But this wild ravening hound is not to be controlled.”

35

He spake, and from the nerve a shaft let flit
Toward *Hector*, yearning to have slain him there.
Him did he miss, but brave *Gorgythion* hit
Full in the breast, whom *Castianeira* fair,
Divine of women, to king *Priam* bare :
And like a poppy he let fall his head,
Which in a garden too much fruit doth wear,
And with the vernal showers is overfed ;
So to the helmet's weight he bowed his comely head.

36

Once more bold Teucer from the nerve let fly
Toward Hector, yearning to have slain him there,
Yet missed ; Apollo turned his aim awry ;
But Archeptolemus, the charioteer,
He caught beside the nipple in full career ;
Prone dashed he, and the horses stammer aside.
Then Hector in sore grief the dead, though dear,
Left, and his brother Kébriones descried,
Who to the chariot mounted, the bright reins to guide.

37

But from the gleaming chariot, swift as fate,
Down to the earth leapt Hector with a yell,
And seized a great stone-boulder, and ran straight
For Teucer, yearning the man's life to quell.
He from the quiver a shaft chosen well
Strung to the nerve : but Hector, as he drew,
Just where the key from neck to breast doth swell,
And stands out naked to the aimer's view,
Hard by the shoulder, there the ragged boulder threw.

38

Numbed was the wrist and the cord rent in twain ;
He, wavering as to kneel, stood, and the bow
Dropt from his nerveless fingers to the plain.
Nor Aias not befriended in that woe
His brother, but ran quick the shield to throw
Where need lay most, and hedged him round thereby.
Nor were Mekisteus and Alastor slow
For Teucer to stoop down, and bear on high,
Back to the hollow ships, him groaning heavily.

39

Then mighty Zeus once more the Trojans fired,
And to the trench they pushed the Achaians sore,
Fierce Hector in the front, with rage inspired.
And as a dog some lion or wild boar
Grips from behind, and narrowing evermore
Leaps at the loin, to grapple him if he can,
So Hector, narrowing as they fled before,
Slew ever and again the hindmost man
Of the long-haired Achaians, and they shoaling ran.

40

When past the palisade and trench the cloud
Of men came flying, thinned by the rough foe,
Hard by the ships they stand, and cry aloud,
And to all gods in heaven their hands upthrow ;
Then as with one voice mighty prayers outflow.
Hector the while reined fiercely in his car
The fiery long-maned horses to and fro,
Eyed like a Gorgon, as he glared afar,
Or man-devouring Ares, when he raves in war.

41

But white-armed Hera grieved to see them die,
And to Athene thus her mind revealed :
“ O child of Zeus, shall no more thou and I
Be touched with sorrow, ere this doom be sealed
For ever, and the land be stript and peeled
Of all our Danaans by the blast of one,
Who in his frenzy up and down the field
Drives beyond all endurance, Priam's son,
Hector ?—behold I say what havoc he hath done !”

42

And the stern-eyed Athene answering said :
“ Now from his bones may strength and life be torn,
And in his own land let them strike him dead !
But lo ! my Father of all sense is shorn,
And madly laughs my just desire to scorn,
Nor this remembers—how I saved his child
Oft, by the labours of Eurystheus worn.
Yea, for he wept to heaven in anguish wild,
And from on high Zeus sent me to deliver his child.

43

“ Had I but known this truly when the king
Sent him to Hades, who hell-gate doth keep,
From Erebus’ dark realm the dog to bring,
Ne’er had he left the Stygian waters steep.
But now Zeus hates me, and lets Thetis reap
Her full demand, who came and kissed his knee,
And held him by the beard, and touched him deep,
To serve Achilleus. But the hour will be
Yet, when his heart once more will turn in love to me.

44

“ Now for us twain thy glittering car unfold,
That to the doors of Zeus our way we make.
There will I arm for battle, and behold
How white-plumed Hector will our advent take,
When through the windows of the war we break.
Then by Achaia’s camp the dogs and birds
Will gloat o’er many a Trojan.” Thus she spake :
Nor white-armed Hera disobeyed her words ;
Straight the gold-shining horses to the car she girds.

45

Meantime the child of ægis-bearing Zeus,
Pallas, the filmy pictured robe she wore,
Wrought by her own hands for herself, let loose,
So that it streamed along her father's floor.
Then she put on that tunic famed of yore,
And bright arms, oft in saddening combat rolled ;
Last the dire ægis cast her shoulders o'er,
And the car clomb, and on the spear laid hold,
Wherewith she tames great heroes till her wrath is cold.

46

Hera the horses plied with scourge and rein.
All in a moment on the wing they leap :
And Heaven's wide gates, of their own impulse fain,
Clanged open, that dense cloud which the Hours keep,
At will to open or shut : here forth they sweep.
And Zeus to golden-feathered Iris cried,
Beholding in his wrath from Ida steep :
" Fly, fly, swift Iris, and turn back their pride,
Ere I myself come near them, and their path bestride.

47

" For I declare, nor will therefrom retreat,
Soon will I hough their horses in the car,
And craze their wheels, and from the lofty seat
So dash them headlong, and their chariot mar,
That not these ten years shall they cool the scar
Which in their flesh my fire shall brand and bite—
To learn Athene not to sin too far.
But Hera's matter, that I count but slight ;
'Tis but to taste once more her old familiar spite."

48

He spake, and Iris, racing with the wind,
Stormed on the errand, and from Ida straight
To far Olympus flew with zealous mind :
There stood before them as they rushed elate
Down the Olympian slope, by the first gate,
And stopped them, and the mind of Zeus declared :
“ Halt, for why rush ye in the jaws of fate ?
Or whither away ? what madness have ye dared ?
Zeus from Achaia bans this help ye have prepared.

49

“ For (if he mean it !) hear Kronion’s threat !
Soon will he hough your horses in the car,
And craze your wheels, and from the lofty seat
So dash you headlong, and your chariot mar,
That not these ten years shall ye cool the scar
Which in your flesh the fire shall brand and bite—
To learn Athene not to sin too far.
But Hera’s matter, that he counts but slight ;
’Tis but to taste once more her old familiar spite.

50

“ Thine is the cost, bold viper, if thou dare
Against high Zeus the bridge of war to tread ! ”
So said the fleet-foot Iris, and in air
Took flight ; but Hera to Athene said :
“ Now not for mortals will I risk my head
Against high Zeus, nor peril thou thine own.
On earth let one be living, and one dead,
Just as it falls ; let Zeus decide alone ;
And, as he wills, in reason let the lot be thrown.”

51

So saying she turned the long-maned horses back ;
Whom the fleet Hours unharness at her call,
And bind them to the ambrosial golden rack,
And the car lean against the shining wall.
Then the divine ones hastened to the hall,
And with the gods there mingled, and reclined
On golden seats, and chewed the cud of gall.
But Zeus, from Ida charioting the wind,
Passed to Olympus hill, the immortal bowers to find.

52

For him the great Earth-shaker high renowned
The fiery steeds of harness disarrayed,
And on the long broad level tier of ground
Set the bright car, and linen overlaid.
But on his golden throne sat Zeus, and made
The vast Olympus shake beneath his feet ;
While Hera and Athene far in shade
Sat, and in silence their own hearts did eat.
There did the Sire discern them, and in these words greet :

53

“ O Hera and Athene, why thus sad ?
Scarce overworked in Trojan-killing fight
I hold ye, though such fiery wrath ye had.
True, that not all gods on Olympus height
Can turn my hand, inviolable in might ;
But *ye* slunk shivering ere one work of war
Ye witnessed in the field—and ye did right.
Else from my branding fire nor ye nor car
Had to this realm come back where the celestials are.”

54

He spake ; but Hera and Athene then
Murmured within their teeth, as they sat near
And hatched calamities for Trojan men.
Athene on Sire Zeus in mood severe
Scowled silent. Hera gave her wrath career,
And cried, " Thou scourge of heaven, what word is this !
We know thee from of old a god austere,
Not to be tamed : but now we fear, I wis,
All Danaans to see gulfed in dark fate's very abyss."

55

And Zeus, the Cloud-compeller, answering said :
" Thou in the morning, if thou list to see,
O large-eyed Hera, shalt view thousands dead
More than to-day, cut off and slain by me,
Fierce-souled Kronion. For I say that he,
Strong Hector, will not from the war refrain,
Till by the fleet Achilleus stirring be,
On that day when they fight beside the main,
Dashed in one shoal together—round Patroclus slain.

56

" For thus divine Fate rules it : nor indeed
Thine angry choler I regard one whit,
Though to the unseen limit thou proceed
Of earth and main, that nethermost dark pit,
Where old Iapetus and Kronos sit,
Nor in the golden arrows of the Sun
Find joyance, and no winds about them flit,
But void hell rails them off—if there thou run,
I reckon not ; for I find no jade to match thee, none."

57

He spake : but white-armed Hera nought replied.
And the clear sunlight dipped in Ocean stream,
Trailing black night along the cornlands wide.
Not to Troy's pleasure fell the sun's bright beam,
But to Achaia did thrice welcome seem,
And beyond language fair, that glooming night.
Then where a lane between the dead did gleam,
Hector a Trojan council in his might,
Hard by the whirling river, did with speed invite.

58

There all dismounting marked the words which fell
From Hector, dear to Zeus, when he begun
The loud harangue. His spear-shaft many an ell
Rose up before him, and a dread light shone
Flashed from the brass and golden ring thereon.
He, leaning on the shaft, spake loud and stern :
" Trojans, Dardanians, and allies, each one,
Hearken ! I thought to slay them all, and burn
Their ships, then back with peace to windy Ilion turn.

59

" But night came first, delivering from our hand
Argives and fleet hard by the beating main ;
So now let us obey dark Night's command,
Set forth the plenteous banquet, and unrein
Our good steeds from the car, and give them grain ;
Then all on foot go quickly, and drive kine
And fat sheep from the city, and come again,
With bread too from the houses, and sweet wine,
And much wood get together, and heap piles of pine ;

60

“ That all night long, till dawning of the day,
Blaze of our burnings may to heaven ascend,
Lest in the dark the Achaian host essay
Over the sea’s broad back in flight to wend ;
Lest they take ship, and none their scheme offend.
Rather let each bear home across the deep
An iron savour that no cure can mend,
That none hereafter, no not even in sleep,
Dream to launch war on Troy, and make our women weep.

61

“ And in the town let sacred heralds cry
That all the striplings in life’s tender flower,
And all old men white-haired, in station lie
Couched on divinely-built wall and tower.
And bid the women, as each findeth power,
A mighty burning fire in court and hall
Feed with fat pinewood till the morning hour.
And let a watch be planted, lest, we all
Being absent, men by stealth upon the city fall.

62

“ So now perform, brave friends, as I ordain :
One wholesome word in season is worth seven :
And in the morning I will speak again.
I now pray Zeus and all the gods in heaven
That from our land these dogs of Fate be driven,
Sent by the Furies with all kinds of harms.
Let this one night to careful watch be given,
And with the earliest dawn arrayed in arms
We to the hollow ships will stir war’s wild alarms.

63

“Then will I learn if Diomede can drive
Me from the ships, or I him spoil and slay.
And he to-morrow, if his spear can strive
With mine, shall know it, though at dawn of day
Doomed, as I think, and others in like way,
To lie down wounded. O that I now were
Deathless for ever, and could shun decay,
And of Athene’s glory be made heir,
So surely as this dawn shall woe to Argos bear.”

64

So Hector spake : the Trojans roared assent,
And loosed the sweating steeds, and made them fast,
Each by his car : anon for beeves they went,
Fat sheep and sweet wine, and much corn amassed,
And pinewood in great piles together cast.
Then to the gods rich hecatombs they killed,
And on the winds to heaven the savour passed,
Sweet—but the high gods tasted not, nor willed
Their offering, against Troy with bitter hatred filled.

65

So they, with high thoughts, on the bridge of war
Sat through the night, their watchfires blazing nigh.
As when the moon and every shining star
Beam loveliest, when the winds in slumber lie,
And in clear outline stand revealed thereby
Sharp peak, and sunken valley, and rifted hill :
Deep beyond deep unutterable the sky
Breaks open, and the night spreads calm and still,
All the stars shine, and joy the shepherd’s heart doth fill—

66

Such in their multitude from Xanthus stream,
Betwixt the rolling river and the main,
In front of Troy the Trojan watchfires gleam,
Which the men kindle and all night sustain.
A thousand fires were burning on the plain,
And beside each sat fifty, in the shine
Of burning fire ; and, champng the white grain
Of barley and spelt, the steeds in ordered line
Hard by their chariots stood, waiting the Dawn divine.

BOOK IX.

1

So Troy kept watch ; but on the Achaians rolled
Delirious Agitation, child of Fear,
And pangs unutterable on each laid hold.
As when two winds come suddenly in career
Down the long barrens of the billowy mere,
Both sweeping wild from Thrace, the North and West,
And the dark wave its dashing mane doth rear,
And the land reeks with seaweed—fear thus pressed
The heart of the Achaians, as in one man's breast.

2

And Agamemnon, with sore grief beset,
Passed up and down, and bade the heralds tell
Each that a council was afoot, nor yet
To shout it : and himself to the work fell
With those who chiefly did in power excel.
Soon in amaze they met ; and Atreus' son
Rose weeping, like the fount of a dark well
Which down a smooth sheer rock doth streaming run.
There, heavily groaning, he in wingèd words begun :

3

“ Friends, leaders of our host from Argos’ shore,
Zeus in dire mischief hath ensnared me fast,
(Hard fate !) who promised and confirmed before
My safe return home when the war was past :
Yet hath he now an ill deceit forecast,
And in no glorious plight, with thousands slain,
Sends me to Argos—for his power is vast,
And thus it pleased him in his mind to ordain,
Who many states hath ruined and will ruin again.

4

“ But come now, turn it in your thoughts, and I
My word will utter : let us all consent
Home to our dear land in the ships to fly,
Since Fate no longer shines on our intent,
Nor Troia shall we take—our strength is spent.”
He spake ; and each on other in mute dread
Stared, and a deep hush through the council went.
Long time the Achaïans on their own hearts fed
In silence : at the last brave Diomedes said :

5

“ O king, thy folly will I first invade,
Where right holds, in debate : nor thou be wroth !
Me for a coward did thy lips upbraid ;
And the host knew it, old and young men both.
In one gift liberal, and in one but loth,
Was Zeus to thee. Imperial might he gave ;
But valour, his chief boon, and hate of sloth
In war, denied : and wilt thou talk the brave
From battle, and write us down mere dastard, churl, or slave ?

6

"Yet if thine own heart drive thee to retreat,
Go! for the way lies open, and hard by
Stands on the beach thy great Mycenian fleet.
But other of the Achaïans will defy
Troy to the bitter end. Or if they fly
Home o'er the barren seas to their own shame,
Then we two only, Sthenelus and I,
Will linger and fight out the bloody game,
Till Troy reel in the balance—for with God we came."

7

Then rang a general cheer; and the old knight
Nestor among them rose, and spake, and said:
"O son of Tydeus, strong thou art in fight,
And of thy peers in council far ahead,
Nor any Achaïan what thy lips have said
Can gainsay: but more yet ripe wisdom brings.
Young art thou, one that might in years be read
My youngest child: yet good and prudent things,
Fit for the time, thou speakest to the Argive kings."

8

"But I, thine elder, can put forth the whole,
While even Agamemnon yields me right.
None but the clanless, lawless, houseless soul
Loves the heart-curdling game of civil fight.
But heeding now the summons of dark night,
Eat, drink, and sentries plant beyond the wall,
Hard by the hollow trench, till dawn of light.
This for the young. All else to thee doth fall,
Great Atreus' son, for thou art kingliest of us all."

9

“Feast thou the elders : ’tis thy right and place.
Thy huts are full of wine, unmingled, sweet,
Borne by Achaian barks each day from Thrace ;
And royal is thy room to drink and eat.
There of so many opinions the most meet
Choose : for the need lies heavy to employ
Wisdom and wit. The Trojans near our fleet
Lie, burning fires. And is there cause for joy ?
This very night will save the whole camp, or destroy.”

10

He ended, and his word was readily done ;
And forth the armed sentinels went thus
By captains—Thrasymedes, Nestor’s son,
Ascalaphus and bold Ialmenus,
Then Mériones, and then Deïpyrus
And Aphareus, and Lycomedes last,
Kreon’s brave son—these seven illustrious
Appointed for the sentries : and each passed
Girt by a hundred youths, with spears embattled fast.

11

Midway they came between the trench and wall,
Where fire they kindled, and each drank and ate.
But Agamemnon took the elders all,
And in his hut good cheer before them set.
So they right willingly to feasting get.
But when desire of meat and drink was gone,
The old man turned to new devices yet,
Nestor, whose counsel ever worthiest shone.
He now with firm goodwill harangued them, and spake on:

12

" O glorious Agamemnon, king of men,
Thou art my first and thou my last, because
Thou rulest over many thousand men,
And Zeus hath planted in thy grasp the laws,
To wield them fairly, and win just applause.
Hence it befits thee both to speak and hear,
And work out other's counsel when it draws
To good ; all utterances to thee still veer ;
Therefore will I now speak what seemliest doth appear.

13

" For no man else can sounder things unfold
Than I myself, both heretofore and now,
Since from Achilleus thou didst seize and hold
Briseïs. For thou well rememberest how
I still denounced it to thy face. But thou,
Yielding to passion, didst invade a man
Held by the gods in honour. Yet e'en now
Come, let us ponder till we find a plan
By words and liberal gifts to soothe him, if we can."

14

And Agamemnon, king of men, replied :
" Old man, not falsely hast thou told the way
Of wrong wherein I sinned, and wandered wide,
Nor I myself can thy rebuke unsay.
One loved by God doth like an army weigh ;
As him Zeus honoured, and in dark defeat
Hath bowed our host. But since I went astray
And yielded to my soul's accursèd heat,
Him would I soften now with lordly payments meet.

15

“ And I will here before you all unfold
What the rich value of my gifts shall be—
Seven fireless tripods, and of virgin gold
Ten talents in full weight, no slender fee,
And twelve steeds of the race, bred generously,
Who by their swiftness many a prize have won.
Lord of such gains as they have brought to me,
No man need lack broad fields beneath the sun,
Nor yet for dearth of gold be ever left undone.

16

“ Moreover women will I send him seven,
Skilled in the study of all household good,
Of Lesbian race, who to my choice were given,
When the fair land of Lesbos he subdued,
And these of women first in beauty stood.
His be they all, and with them shall be led
Briseïs, whom I reaved with insult rude.
And by a great oath will I bind my head
That in the manner of men I have not known her bed.

17

“ All this shall on the spot be made his own ;
And if hereafter the celestials will
That Priam's mighty town be overthrown,
Then let him enter, and compile a hill
Of brass and gold, his heavy bark to fill,
When we, the Achaian host, our prey divide,
And twenty Trojan women, of good skill
In matters of the house, elect beside,
Who, next to Argive Helen, chief in grace preside.

18

“ And if we sail to Argos, womb of earth,
My son shall he be made, and held by me
Peer to that tender sapling of my hearth,
Orestes. In my house are daughters three,
Virgins, Chrysothemis, Laodice,
And Iphianassa. Whom he list soe’er,
Home let him lead her without tax or fee ;
And I will add such gifts, exceeding rare,
As no man for his child did ever yet prepare.

19

“ And well-built cities will I yield him seven,
Green Ira, Enopè, and Cardamyl,
Aipeia fair, and Pheræ blest of heaven,
Deep-lawned Antheia, wet with many a rill,
Pedasus crowned with vineyards on the hill—
All on the coast-line beyond Pylos bay.
Men rich in flocks and herds that region fill,
Who at his feet, as at a god’s, will lay
Gifts, and beneath his rule their fat revenues pay.

20

“ All this I yield him if he tame his fire—
Why should he not? Grim Hades, barred from light,
He only burns with unappeasable ire,
And all men hate him. Let Achilleus’ might
Bow then to mine, for ampler royal right,
And that I elder am in years than he.”
Then answered Nestor the Gerenian knight :
“ O glorious Agamemnon, all men see
How to that chief thou offerest no unkingly fee.

21

“ But let us now send chosen men, to go
Right quickly to the hut of Peleus' son.
Yea, I will see to it, if it please ye so.
Chiefly let Phoenix, dear to Zeus, be one,
Then large-limbed Aias, and Laertes' son,
Divine Odysseus, and of heralds, two,
Eurybates and Odios, and let none
Speak with his lips, till with the lustral dew
Our hands we lave and mercy from the Father sue.”

22

He ended, and they all approved his speech.
Then water on their hands the heralds pour,
Youths crown the bowls with wine, and cups to each
Distribute. They to heaven their offering bore,
Red wine, and drank it, till none wished for more ;
From Agamemnon's hut then trooped apace.
But the old knight still taught them o'er and o'er,
Odysseus most, with eyes on each man's face,
How with the blameless child of Peleus to find grace.

23

Hard by the rolling thunder of the sea
They paced together, lifting many a prayer
To king Poseidon that their suit might be
Graced by the son of Peleus. So they fare
To the chief's hut, and find him soothing there
His mind with the shrill lyre, to songs he knew
That lyre with silver yoke, and carven fair,
Which from Eëtion's spoil he chose and drew—
Soothing his mind he sang heroic deeds thereto.

24

Over against him sat Patroclus dumb,
He only, tarrying till the master cease.
And lo! the ambassadors both forward come,
Odysseus first, and stood before his knees.
And, lyre in hand, the chief, beholding these,
Sprang to his feet, and with him rose his friend.
Then swift Achilleus gave them words of peace :
“ O princes, hail ! On some great quest ye wend,
Ye to my heart still dear, whoever else offend.”

25

Thus said Achilleus, and with outstretched hand
Leading them forward made his guests recline
On benches strewn with purple, and command
Gave to his friend, Menœtius' son divine :
“ Bring now with speed a larger bowl of wine
And mix it stronger, and set cups to cheer
Each : for to-night beneath this roof of mine
Friends are come in, my nearest and most dear.”
Thus did he speak. Patroclus to his friend gave ear.

26

Then in the blazing firelight his great board
He planted, and thereon of hog, goat, sheep,
All flourishing with fat, the chine he stored.
These held Automedon, and wide and deep
Achilleus sliced, then spitted the full heap ;
And a great fire divine Patroclus lit.
But when the crackling flame began to sleep,
He raked the embers, on the stones each spit
Laid, and the sacred salt then sprinkled, as is fit.

27

So with much care he roasted all the meat,
And on the table ranged it, and set bread
In silver baskets for the chiefs to eat.
Achilleus dealt out portions, head by head,
Where he sat fronting, o'er the banquet spread,
Divine Odysseus from the adverse wall ;
Then bade Patroclus in the fire to shed
The gods' due part, and he obeyed ; and all,
With eager hand outstretched, upon the viands fall.

28

When the desire was quenched of food and drink,
Aias to Phoenix nodded, and divine
Odysseus in his heart knew what to think,
And brimmed his goblet, and held forth the wine,
And spake : " Achilleus, hail, dear friend of mine !
Neither before in Agamemnon's hut,
Nor here now, do we lack whereon to dine,
Corn in abundance, and fat joints to cut ;
Nought that beseems high banquet from our hand is shut.

29

" But thoughts far other than of feast and song
Now hold us ; for, divine one, in our sight
Loom clouds of sorrow, and our fear is strong ;
Nor know we if our ships at morning light
Will stand or fall, except thou come with might.
For Troy's brave host, and their allies from far,
Near to our fleet and wall lie camped to-night,
And in the plain their watchfires burning are,
And even now they threaten the black ships to mar.

30

“ Yea, on their right Kronion hath revealed
His sign, and Hector in his hope so yearns,
Mad with the fire of Zeus, to sweep the field,
That even now both men and gods he spurns,
And oft aloud, such fury in him burns,
Chides the divine Dawn that her feet are lame ;
For he is set to break the high-built sterns
Off from our ships, and wrap the wrecks in flame,
And in the smoke hunt down the Achaians near the same.

31

“ Nor is my heart not shaken lest with joy,
By the decrees of heaven, his thought he reap,
And we be fated to find here in Troy,
Far from our native fields, an iron sleep.
Up then, at last arise, in harness leap
On the rough battle, and our cause befriend !
Else wilt thou feel an after anguish deep ;
For wrong once done no medicine can mend.
Think, if in time thou mayst our evil day forefend.

32

“ Ah, my beloved ! Thy father Peleus said
That day, from Phthia when he let thee part :
‘ My child, Athene and queen Hera dread
Will, if they will, give strength : rule thou thy heart.
’Tis better to be gentle. Let no smart
Stir thee to evil strife, that young and old
May honour thee the more, where’er thou art.’
Such were his words, which in thy breast to hold
Thou dost forget.—Cease, turn, and bid thy wrath be cold.

33

“ Not worthless are the gifts that shall be given,
Which Agamemnon in the camp to thee
Hath vowed to render—fireless tripods seven,
Ten talents of pure gold, no slender fee,
Caldrons a score, twelve steeds bred generously,
Who in the swift race many a prize have won.
Who earns such wealth as by those horses he,
Needs not to lack broad fields beneath the sun,
Needs not for dearth of gold be ever left undone.

34

“ Moreover women will he send thee seven,
Skilled in the study of all household good,
Of Lesbian race, who to his choice were given
When that fair island was by thee subdued,
And these of women first in beauty stood.
All will he give, and with them shall be led
Brisëis, whom he reaved with insult rude.
And by a great oath will he bind his head
That in the manner of men he hath not known her bed.

35

“ All this shall on the spot be made thine own ;
And if hereafter the celestials will
That Priam's mighty town be overthrown,
Then shalt thou enter, and compile a hill
Of brass and gold, thy heavy bark to fill,
When we the Achaians shall our prey divide,
And twenty Trojan women of good skill
In matters of the house elect beside,
Who, next to Argive Helen, chief in grace preside.

36

“ And if we sail to Argos, womb of earth,
Thou shalt be married to his child, and be
Peer to that tender sapling of his hearth,
Orestes. In his house dwell daughters three,
Virgins, Chrysothemis, Laodice,
And Iphianassa. Whom thou list soe’er,
Home shalt thou lead her without tax or fee;
And he will add such gifts, exceeding rare,
As no man for his child did ever yet prepare.

37

“ And well-built cities will he yield thee seven,
Green Ira, Enopè, and Cardamyl,
Aipeia fair, and Pheræ blest of heaven,
Deep-lawned Antheia, wet with many a rill,
Pedasus crowned with vineyards on the hill—
All on the coast-line beyond Pylos bay.
Men rich in flocks and herds that region fill,
Who at thy feet, as at a god’s, will lay
Gifts, and beneath thy rule their fat revenues pay.

38

“ All these, to quench thy fire, will he bestow.
But if within thy soul thou dost abhor
Both Agamemnon and his gifts, yet so
Have pity on the Achæians, wounded sore
And broken in the camp, who will adore
Thee like a god—their fame is in thy hand.
Hector is now not far, but at thy door
Raves loudly that no Danaan in the land,
None that our ships brought hither, can before him stand.”

39

Answered the fleet Achilleus in his turn :
" Versed in all craft, Laertes' son divine,
No, three times no !—the word is light to learn,
Just as I mean it, to the very line
Of fixed resolve that will not brook decline.
Clear let it ring, that no man deem it well
To murmur on, for any lies of mine :
Him count I hateful as the doors of hell
Who in his heart thinks other than his tongue doth tell.

40

" Nay, hear me out ! I move not hand or knee,
Neither for Agamemnon Atreus' son,
Nor all the Danaan kings. What boots it me
Eternally for ever to go on
Fighting with hostile men, where thanks are none ?
For though a man bide fast in his own place,
Or drink war to the dregs, our doom is one.
The sluggard and the strong find equal grace ;
All in the dust lie down, the valiant and the base.

41

" Or weigh my griefs—am I so far preferred
That I should always set my life at stake ?
See with each morsel how the mother-bird
Flies to her callow nestlings in the brake,
And with herself it fares ill for their sake ;
So ever in the field have I gone through
The toil of bloody days, and lain awake
The long nights, brooding what was left to do,
Still with the enemy warring for the wives of you.

42

“ Twelve cities with my fleet, and twelve save one
On dry land sieging have I sacked in Troy,
Each with a hoard of spoil, and Atreus’ son
Sat by the ships, and here and there a toy
Dealt from my gains, but did the rest enjoy.
All other of the kings their guerdon reap
Whole in the camp, but mine he doth destroy,
Mine only of the Achaians, and doth keep
Her that I love—now let him in soft dalliance sleep !

43

“ Why do the men of Argos fight and fall ?
Or to what end is this far-famed array ?
Hath not the bright-haired Helen caused it all ?
Yes, no man ever loved his wife but they,
None but the sons of Atreus ! Rather say
All that are good and wise love well their own,
As I loved her, albeit my sword’s prey.
Now am I robbed and cheated, I alone—
Go, let him spare his pains : no offering shall atone.

44

“ Nay, with thyself, Odysseus, and the kings,
This ravage of red fire I warn him quench.
Without my help hath he done many things,
Builded a wall, and dug with stakes a trench ;
Yet bloody is the sword in Hector’s clench
Still. When I fought, no challenge to the plain
Could from the hold of Troy this Hector wrench
Save to the Western gates that front the main :
There he abode my wrath, and scarce got home again.

45

“ Now with brave Hector will I fight no more.
This but remaineth, that I vows fulfil
To Zeus and all the gods, then leave the shore
With barks well laden ; and, if so thou will,
And if the care to see it is with thee still,
Thou on broad Hellespont may'st view my fleet
Ride early in the morning, rowed with skill ;
And if Poseidon give us help, my feet
On the third day will stand in Phthia's green retreat.

46

“ There I go back to many things I love ;
Nor empty are my ships of brass and gold,
And fair-zoned women over and above,
And glittering steel, my wages that I hold.
But he that gave it, now with outrage bold,
Great Agamemnon, doth my guerdon spoil.
Therefore I bid you all my words unfold,
That, if again some Danaan he would foil,
Then may that dire offence the Achaian host embroil.

47

“ His brows are shameless, and his soul to boot,
Yet me the craven durst not front again,
Though cloked in impudence from face to foot.
No counsel will I weave, no task ordain,
With him who trapt me in so foul a train,
Nor can his glozing tongue me twice ensnare.
Away with him for ever ! Zeus hath ta'en
His wits. I hate, and can in no wise bear,
Sight of his gifts, nor him do I count worth a hair.

48

“ Not though he gave me twice ten fold, or more,
His wealth, and made Orchomenus my bait,
Or Thebes of Egypt, full of countless store,
Thebes the wide hundred-gated, and each gate
Lets out two hundred charioteers in state,
Though treasures he might deal like dust or sand,
Not even then could he my wrath abate,
Till from my soul he purge the searing brand,
And uttermost revenge uprender to my hand.

49

“ And as for marriage, I will not come near
A child of Agamemnon, Atreus’ son.
Though she be golden Aphrodite’s peer
In beauty, and Athene’s art outrun,
Not thus, nor ever, shall that rite be done.
Nay, let him rather, as he list, provide
Some Argive kingly enough to be his son ;
For, if the gods me safely homeward guide,
Peleus himself will find some maiden for my bride.

50

“ In Hellas there are maids of kingly line,
And fit wives may be chosen from the same.
Yea, there not seldom doth my soul incline
To get me a good wife, some noble dame,
And my sire’s wealth enjoy. Life’s worth may claim
More than men say Troy held in days of old,
That time of peace before the Achaians came,
More than that stony barrier can enfold
In the Apollonian shrine, on Pytho’s rocky hold.

51

“For oxen and fat sheep abide their price,
And lost may be redeemed in spoil again,
And tripods may be had not once nor twice,
And high-bred horses with their golden mane.
But man’s life, when it flies, no power can chain,
And in the spoils of war ’tis nowhere found,
Nor hunters in the field that prize obtain,
When naked to the night that hems it round
Once from the teeth it slips, and is beyond the bound.

52

“My mother silver-footed Thetis saith,
Fate can I choose of twain—if here I fight,
Dies my return, my glory knows not death ;
But homeward if I sail, my glory quite
Dies, but a long time shall I see the light,
And from cold death live many days apart.
And verily ’twere wise to share my flight,
All ye the rest. Troy’s town defies your art ;
Zeus makes his arm their shield, and gives the people heart.

53

“Now to the princes of the camp go ye,
And tell my words : it is their right to hear :
That with a better judgment they may see
How from this doom both men and fleet to clear.
This project of their mind will not cohere,
Nor bend me, to the which they set their hand.
But Phoenix shall remain till dawn appear,
And in my ships go back to the dear land
To-morrow, if he will—by his own choice I stand.”

54

He spake, and all in silence bowed the head,
The stern rebuke so fiercely he rolled out ;
Till with strong tears the old knight Phœnix said,
While for the ships he trembled sore in doubt :
“ Achilleus, if indeed thou art about
Homeward to pass, and, in thy wrath so hot,
To let Troy burn our ships, and put to rout
The Achaian host, and work I know not what,
How then can I, dear child, remain where thou art not ?

55

“ That day, from Phthia when he let thee go,
Not yet familiar with the ways of fight,
Nor in the council seen where great men show,
Me Peleus sent, to learn thee all things right,
To put words in thy mouth, and deeds incite ;
Nor will I leave thee till my time is told,
Not though a god should undertake to-night
To peel the years off, and my youth re-mould,
As when I left sweet Hellas in the days of old.

56

“ Thou knowest how I fled my father's face,
Who raged against me for that harlot fair
Whom he so loved, and did his wife disgrace :
Till with the harlot at my mother's prayer,
To make the old man loathed, I mingled there.
But he soon knew it, and called down on me
Full many a curse, and by the Furies swear
No child of mine should ever climb his knee ;
And the Hell-king gave ear, and dire Persephonè.

57

“ Him with sharp iron would I fain have killed,
But some one of the gods mine anger laid,
Who with the fear of rumour my heart filled,
And of the tongues of men remembrance made,
Lest me the Achaians with the name upbraid
Of patricide. But in the house no more
I deigned to dwell beneath my father's shade,
Though all my kith and kin desired it sore,
And strove with all their power my hard will to implore.

58

“ Still in the court from morn to eve they slew
Fat sheep by scores, and trailing-footed kine,
And evermore they singed, and made pass through
Hephæstus' fire, the goodly sides of swine,
And from the jars drank up the old man's wine.
Then by relays a wakeful watch they kept,
And lingered in the house till nights were nine.
One bearded blaze beneath the porch still leapt,
One by the chamber-doors burned ever as we slept.

59

“ But when the tenth night came, my doors I burst,
Cleared the main wall, escaped the guard of men,
Slipt female eyes, and fled through Hellas first,
And on to Phthia, rich in herb and grain,
To Peleus king, who there received me fain,
And loved me as a father loves his child,
When child he hath but one to heir his gain,
And in my hand much wealth and lordship piled :
There mid the tribes I held dominion, though exiled.

60

“ So for love’s sake I made thee what thou art,
Godlike Achilleus ; for with none but me
At table ever wouldst thou play thy part,
Till with choice bits I fed thee on my knee,
And held wine to thy lips : my breast would be
Oft dabbled with the wine thy weakness spilt.
Thus have I toiled and suffered much for thee,
Since never from *my* loins could race be built ;
Thee for my child I took, my bulwark, if thou wilt.

61

“ Tame then thy wrath : the very gods will turn,
And, though a man sin far, their hearts incline
To heed our vows, and the fat gifts we burn.
For Prayers are daughters of great Zeus divine,
Lame, wrinkled, haggard, and of sidelong eyen.
These are in Atè’s track still moving slow.
But Atè hath strong hands to make men pine,
She with firm tread the earth walks dealing woe,
And they behind her toil, and cure it as they go.

62

“ He who the daughters of great Zeus on high
Shall reverence in his heart when they come near,
Him they much help, and still regard his cry.
But whoso drives them off and will not hear,
Then they seek Zeus, and at his knees appear,
That Atè mark him, and avenge the wrong.
But thou, Achilleus, to their suit give ear,
This honour that they ask deny not long,
They who the stern hearts bend of others that are strong.

63

“ Save for set gifts, and other named beside
By Atreus' son, not lightly to give o'er
Thy wrath would it seem wise, and help provide
To save the army, though their need were sore.
Now doth he bring large gifts, and promise more,
And of the chiefs whom thou dost love the best
Hath sent with prayers the noblest to thy door.
Spurn not their feet, nor yet deny their quest,
Albeit, before, in anger thou didst well to rest.

64

“ Such were the men of old of whom we hear ;
Their anger might be tamed with gifts, and taught.
This I remember in an age not near ;
And to you all, my friends, the tale is brought.
Once the Curètes and Ætolians fought
Round Calydon with deeds of high renown,
And many were the deaths. Ætolia sought
To shield the lovely Calydonian town,
And the Curètes strove with fire to raze it down.

65

“ For bright-throned Artemis plagued sore the land,
She lacking, when the gods received their hire,
Her own first-fruits : for Æneus held his hand,
Rash or not knowing ; but the sin was dire.
So the divine Maid-archer, stung with ire,
Sent a wild white-fanged boar ; and the fell brute
Found him a lair, and trod the fields to mire,
Laid vineyards waste, and tore up by the root
The tall trees of the land, with branch and flower and fruit.

66

“ Him Meleager son of Ceneus slew,
With hounds and huntsmen gathered to his aid
From many cities : for he scorned a few,
This huge beast, mad with power, of nought afraid,
And much men on the funeral-pyre he laid.
But she, yet pouring the full plagues of sin,
Between Curêtis and Ætolia made
A great shout, and the unutterable din
Of arms, for the boar’s head, and for his bristly skin.

67

“ While Meleager, dear to Ares, fought,
Still the Curêtes badly fared in strife,
And to their walls fell back, achieving nought.
But when wrath darkened Meleager’s life,
Wrath, which in hearts of even the wise is rife,
He angry with Althæa, who him bare,
Lay housed with Cleopatra, his dear wife,
Child of Evenus’ child, Marpessa fair,
And Idas, flower of knights that on the earth then were.

68

“ He for his lovely bride with shaft and bow
Braved Phœbus; and their child for ever kept
The name Halcyonè, a name of woe,
Thereafter in the house ; so wildly wept,
When lord Apollo her from Idas swept,
That mother in the bitter halcyon strain—
Housed with his wife an angry sloth he slept,
Eating his mother’s curse with fell disdain,
Who by the gods had cursed him for her brethren slain.

69

" She madly with both hands, and madlier yet,
Kind Earth would beat, and falling with prone knee
And eyes down, till with tears her breast was wet, .
Hades implore, and dire Persephone
Against her child, that death for death might be.
Soon the night-wandering Fury heard her cry,
And with a heart like flint from hell came she.
Rolled on the air a dreadful clang went by,
War's thunder at the gates, and battered towers on high.

70

" Anon the elders of Ætolia send
The noblest of their priesthood with much prayer,
To win forth Meleager to defend
Their walls, and promise a great gift. For where
Soil on the plain lay richest and most fair
In lovely Calydon, good land enow
They proffered, an estate to be cut there,
The one half vineyard, where he list and how,
And the one half clear tilth that crumbles to the plough.

71

" Also the old knight Ceneus prayed him sore,
And oft returned and gave his ears no rest,
Shaking the strong leaves of the chamber-door.
Yea, though his mother and his sisters prest,
• He would not. And the friends whom he loved best
Came and besought him, men of high renown,
Nor was the heart yet tamed within his breast,
Till the man's chamber was half beaten down,
And the foe scaled the walls, and wasted the great town.

72

"Then, last of all, about his neck to weep
His dear wife hung, and in extreme dismay
Cast on his mind the bitter things they reap
Whose city to their foes is given a prey ;
How in the victory grown men they slay,
And sack the town with fire, and children hale,
And some the deep-zoned women rend away.
And his heart smote him as he heard the tale,
And he sprang forth to go, and seized his shining mail.

73

"Thus Meleager did Ætolia save,
Impelled by his own heart; but in the end
Received not at their hand the gift so brave,
Yet did the work. But thou relent, dear friend,
Rise, and the gifts go with thee! To defend
Our ships when flaming were less worth by far.
Come, for thine honour shall man's fame transcend.
But when, without gifts, thy feet mount the car,
Less shalt thou gain in honour, and yet help the war."

74

And answering spake the swift Achilles there :
"O Phoenix, dear old man, I nought regard
This honour (and yet Zeus hath given my share),
Which holds me by the fleet, a life so hard,
Till the breath fail me, and my knees be marred.
Yet one word more, and it my last shall be :
Vex not my soul with weepings, but discard
Thy favour to the king. 'Tis not for thee,
Whom I love, to love him, and turn away from me.

75

“Stand ever at my side in love, in hate,
And half mine honour, half my realm, is thine.
And join not in their tidings, but here wait
And sleep on a soft couch, till morning shine :
Then better can we shape our own design.”
So, to send out the others, with his head
He to Patroclus bowed a silent sign
In the hut quickly to strew Phœnix’ bed.
And Telamonian Aias then arose and said :

76

“Son of Laertes, in the way we go
End can I none find out : let us depart.
Bad is our news, but we must let them know.
Come, for Achilleus bears an iron heart,
Nor can the love we lent him heal his smart.
Yet payment still for child or brother slain
Men take, and for a price keep down their heart,
And bid the slayer in the land remain—
But, for this girl, the gods let never thy wrath wane.

77

“Now seven for one we yield, the best we find,
And gifts abundant—thine own roof revere.
Thy suppliants are we come, to bend thy mind,
Of all Achaia thy most near and dear !”
But he : “Brave Aias, prince divine, give ear !
Right nobly dost thou speak ; I love thee well.
But when I ponder how in public here
He used me like a villain, my reins swell
With anger, and I hate him with the hate of hell.

78

"Go now your ways, and render back my word :
Ne'er of the bloody field will I think more,
Till by the Myrmidons' own camp is heard
The roll of Hector's march, and from my door
I see the son of Priam driving sore
Your host, and burning with red fire the fleet.
But when the battle round my hut shall roar,
And all about me there come smoke and heat,
Hector, I think, though raging, will at last retreat."

79

He ended, and each took the double cup,
And to the gods a sweet libation poured,
Then by the long beach to the camp went up,
Odysseus first, the Cephallenian lord.
But to the maidens and the men gave word
Patroclus, now to let their guest recline.
So they to Phoenix a fair couch afford,
Fleece, blanket, and the flower of linen fine,
And the old man lay down, waiting the Dawn divine.

80

Deep in the chamber of his hut well-wrought
Achilleus slumbered, and beside him there
That captive woman he from Lesbos brought,
Daughter of Phorbas, Diomeda fair,
Slept ; and Patroclus set his couch elsewhere,
And by his side the well-zoned Iphis lay,
Whom freely from the spoil, his bed to share,
Divine Achilleus gave him on that day
When Scyros' towers he took, where held Enyeus sway.

81

Now on the ambassadors' return rose up
The sons of the Achaians, all awake.
They to the chiefs held many a golden cup,
Entreating them with zeal their news to break.
But first imperial Agamemnon spake :
"Thou glorious chief, renowned Odysseus, tell
If he will now ward off, for the gifts' sake,
Fire from the fleet, or doth he still rebel,
And in his high-souled heart doth bitter rage yet swell ?"

82

Answered the man of many toils : "O king,
None will he of thy gifts ; but worse to-night,
Worse than before he burns, and bids thee cling
To thine own counsels, and make good thy might.
Yea, the man threatens to launch out with light,
And o'er the sea with laden barks depart.
He tells us it were wise to share his flight,
All we the rest. 'Troy's towers defy your art :
Zeus makes his arm their shield, and gives the people heart.'

83

"Such were his words : the prudent heralds twain
And Aias heard him, who with me were sent.
But Phoenix for the night doth there remain ;
And on the morrow 'tis the chief's intent
To bear him overseas, if he consent."
He spake ; and each on other in mute dread
Stared, and a deep hush through the council went.
Long time the Achaians on their own hearts fed
In silence : at the last brave Diomedes said :

84

“ O glorious Agamemnon, king of men,
Not for thine honour didst thou stoop to seek
This lordly child of Peleus in his den,
And with thy myriad gifts his help bespeak,
Who never in his life was mild or meek.
Now in his heart far deadlier pride is cast.
But leave him as he list his mood to wreak
Here or beyond seas : let it fall or last :
He'll fight when the god drives him, and his spleen is past.

85

“ But all now hearken, and obey my plan !
Hence, and find slumber : ye are filled, I say,
With corn and wine, the very bone of man.
And, when the rosy Dawn leads up the day,
Hard by the fleet both men and steeds array,
And in the front, O king, thy station keep.”
Thus Diomedes ; and the rest obey.
First to the gods they poured libations deep ;
Each his own place then sought, and took the gift of sleep.

B O O K X.

1

Now lay the chieftain warriors all the night,
Loosed with ambrosial sleep in every limb.
But on his couch far other was the plight
Of Agamemnon, son of Atreus : him
Sleep had not, but a siege of troubles grim.
As when the Father of the gods on high,
Moving dire rain or hail or sleet-storm dim,
Sends thunder, when the fields in snow-drift lie,
Where men by the wild flash war's yawning mouth descry ;

2

So ever Agamemnon in his breast
Groaned from the heart, and his reins trembled sore.
One while upon the plain his eyes would rest,
And lo, Troy burning fires, their wall before,
And a clear sound of pipes, and the dull roar
Of warriors on the watch till night depart !
One while he viewed the Achaians and the shore,
And in his terror to high Zeus would start,
Tear by the root his locks, and rend with groans his heart.

3

And in his spirit it seemed wisest far
To seek Neleïan Nestor for his guide
First, if the old man some design of war
Could yet reveal, and fair escape provide.
Thus minded he arose, and quickly tied
His tunic, and the sandals' shining gear,
Then round him wrapt a lion's tawny hide,
(A great red lion, with eyes dealing fear),
Which robed him to the feet ; then turning grasped his spear.

4

Also on Menelaus tremblings fell,
Nor could divine sleep to his eyes come in,
For terror lest the Argives fare not well,
Who for him sailed the wasteful deep, to win
Troy. Round his waist he wrapt a leopard's skin,
With fair spots dappled, as with stars the night,
Then laced the brazen helm beneath his chin,
And went to rouse his brother, who with might
The people ruled, and seemed all godlike in their sight.

5

Him found he by the hollow bark half-clad
With gleaming mail about his loins and breast.
And Agamemnon saw him, and was glad :
Whom Menelaus, entering, then addressed :
" Why thus in arms, my brother, in time of rest ?
Hast thou some matter for our spies to read ?
Now much I fear lest none perform thy quest.
A shrewd task is it to creep forth at need,
And spy foes in the night—that man were bold indeed !"

6

Then said the king : " Deft counsels I and thou
Need, O my brother ; for the powers above
Turn only to the prayers of Hector now.
By heaven, I knew not that one man could move
Such troublous things, as we from Hector prove,
In one day, though of seed divine he were.
Now hath he wrought, by the great Father's love,
Such wonders, as for many and many a year
All Argives shall remember, and their children hear.

7

" But quick, Idomeneus and Aias call,
The while I rouse up Nestor to come out
And seek our watchmen, and direct them all.
To him the men will hearken, and not doubt ;
For Thrasymedes is their captain stout,
His own son, and the Cretan Méridones."
But he made answer : " Shall I roam about
To find thy face, when I have gone to these,
Or there abide, and wait thy coming at our ease ?"

8

" There bide," he said, " lest to and fro we tramp,
Each hurrying after each, a fruitless game,
Since many are the roads that cut the camp.
Now go with speed, nor let thy feet be lame,
And going call each by his father's name,
Yea, glorify them all, and be not proud.
As men still labour, so must we the same,
Whom even at our birth the Sire endowed
With hard grief, and our neck with heavy burdens bowed."

9

So saying, he sent his brother, and passed out
To find brave Nestor where he lay that night
On soft couch sleeping, with his arms about,
Shield and the two great spears and helmet bright ;
And the fine belt lay near, which the old knight
Wore, when his people to the charge he led :
For age could not yet wean him from the fight.
Now on the elbow raised, lifting his head,
Nestor of Atreus' son demanded, and thus said :

10

" Who art thou, walking the wide camp alone
In the dark night, when other mortals sleep ?
Come not in silence, but thy need make known."
And from the gloom the king's voice answered deep :
" Not like a spy doth Agamemnon creep,
On whom, O Nestor, troubles are rained thick,
While breath yet lingers, and my knees I keep.
Mine eyes lack slumber, and my soul is sick—
War and Achaian woes torment me to the quick.

11

" Fear holds me for the Danaans, and my heart
Knocks at the ribs, and on my flesh the hair
Stands, and with trembling knees I quail and start.
Rise, for thou too art lying awake with care,
Come with me to the guards, see how they fare.
It may be, toil and heavy sleep bring low
Their vigil, and of guards our camp is bare.
Hard by, the enemy waits ; nor can we know
If the night yet pass over ere he strike the blow."

12

Him answered Nestor, the Gerenian chief :
" O glorious Agamemnon, king of men,
Far-seeing Zeus will never bind the sheaf
In Hector's harvest. For our one woe ten
Hereafter shall recoil, in that day when
Achilleus turneth. But I go with thee.
Call we anon brave Diomede, and then
Odysseus, and fleet Aias—with these three,
And Phyleus' valiant son, forth to the watch will we.

13

" Only if some one would go forth and call
Both godlike Aias and the Cretan king,
Right loyal were the service, and not small,
For at the limit of the fleet's far wing
They lie. But Menelaus, in this thing,
Dear though he is—rebuke me, if thou list—
I blame, that thou alone art labouring.
He should be up, to hold the chiefs at tryst,
Now in a need so near and terrible to resist."

14

And Agamemnon, king of men, replied :
" To-night, old man, reserve thy blame, I pray ;
Oft, oft he slackens, and is slow to guide,
Not for dull sloth nor any clownish trait,
But that he lingers till I first essay.
But this time he was up, yea rousing me,
And for these two same chiefs is gone away.
Come ! by the gates among the guard they be :
There did I bid them hold till we arrive and see."

15

Him answered Nestor, the Gerenian knight :
“ Now for this thing let never man be found
Not forward when thy brother calls to fight !”
This said, he fastened the fair tunic round,
And to his shining feet the sandals bound,
Then buckled to the clasp his mantle grand,
Thrice-folded, dense, of purple grain renowned,
And, with the brass-tipt javelin in his hand,
Hard by the ships went forth along the silent strand.

16

Then first Odysseus he aroused ; the cry
Rang to his midriff ; he came forth and said :
“ Say why alone amid the camp ye ply
Through the divine dark—is your need so dread ?”
And in return Gerenian Nestor said :
“ Zeus-born Laértiades, in wit supreme,
Up, for a great woe doth behind us tread !
Come to the next and rouse him for what scheme,
Flight or the sword, may save us in this dire extreme.”

17

Thus Nestor spake, and to the hut went back
Odysseus, and about his shoulders threw
The well-wrought shield, and followed in their track,
On to the valiant Diomedes, who
Lay with the arms, and all his sleeping crew,
On the open ground, each pillowed on a shield.
Fast to their spikes the long spears planted grew
Point upward from the earth, and far afield
Flashed like the fire of Zeus the brazen hedge revealed.

18

There slept the hero by his casque and plume,
An ox-hide strewn beneath him, and his head
Propt on a rug, with colours of the loom.
Then came Gerenian Nestor to his bed,
And stirred him with his foot, and jeering said :
“ Wake, son of Tydeus ! wilt thou snore all night ?
Or hath none told thee how the Trojans spread
Their fiery watch by yonder upland height, [smite.”
Hard on our ships ? small ground withholds them, ere they

19

Thus spake Gerenian Nestor, and the man
Leapt with a violent impulse to his feet,
And in a loud voice wingèd words began :
“ What ! good my lord, will never age defeat
Thy valour, and no toil thy sinews beat ?
Men fairly might be found, more young than thou,
On stir to call each captain of the fleet.
But truly thy grey hairs and wrinkled brow
Hide a green heart, old man ; and we are forced to bow.”

20

And him Gerenian Nestor answered then :
“ My child, thy words have reason. I can boast
Much people, and my sons are blameless men,
Who soon would call the captains to their post.
But now of the whole war we suffer most,
And whether life itself be lost or won
Stands on a razor's edge to all our host.
Yet age is faint : if thou wilt spare me, run,
Call from his hut fleet Aias, and bring Phyleus' son.”

21

Then Tydeus' son a lion's tawny hide
Flung round him, and went forth, and brought the men.
So with the guards they mingled, nor espied
One watchman sleeping or disarmed. As when
The patient sheep-dogs prowl about the pen,
Who hear a wild beast on the woodland hills
Driven with an echoing sound of dogs and men,
Thus were they sleepless in that night of ills :
Each murmur from the plain the leaning listener thrills.

22

And the old man cried out with gladdening voice :
" Thus ever watch, dear children, nor be caught
By slumber, lest we make our foes rejoice !"
So saying, he crossed the trench, and with him brought
That council of the chiefs whom the king sought,
And his own son with Méridones. So led,
They passing the deep trench, as they were taught,
Found a clear space, a lane among the dead, [spread.
Where Hector breathed from blood, when Night her curtain

23

There seated on the ground they counsel weave ;
And first old Nestor did his mind declare :
" O friends, doth any here so much believe
His own high spirit as yonder camp to dare,
If haply on the skirt one straggling there
He find, or even among the Trojans gain
Some rumour of the work they now prepare,
And whether they resolve to hold the plain,
Or to the walls go back, so many Achaians slain ?

24

“ These matters could one hear, and straight return
Whole to this council, the right famous deed
Would go forth under heaven for all to learn,
And glorious were the gift to him decreed.
For all our bravest, that here take the lead,
Each for himself will render a black ewe
And sucking lamb, till there be no such meed
Seen on the earth as to that man falls due ;
And still, when feasts come round, he shall be called thereto.”

25

Such were his words ; but all the rest were dumb,
Till the far-shouting Diomedes spake :
“ Nestor, a loud call from my heart doth come,
This night the bars of yonder camp to break.
Yet if another would my way partake,
Then better were the hope, nor worse the cheer.
When two share danger, each is more awake,
But he that singly goes, how good soe’er,
Is sleepier in the work, and hath a wit less clear.”

26

He ended, and full many uprose amain.
Fain were the two Aiantes, sons of fight ;
Fain too was Mériones, and doubly fain
The child of Nestor ; fain the illustrious might
Of Menelaus ; fain that patient knight
Laértiades Odysseus, to explore
With Tydeus’ son the camp of Troy by night,
So firm a heart within his breast he wore.
Then Agamemnon spake, who chief dominion bore :

27

"O son of Tydeus, Diomedes beloved,
As for the comrade of thy bold emprise,
Choose whom thou wilt, the valiantest approved,
Of them that offer: see, how many arise!
Nor let it now seem gracious in thine eyes,
Awed by the name of homage, to coerce
Thy spirit to do aught not sternly wise,
And, for their sake whom kinglier houses nurse,
Now to refuse the better and elect the worse."

28

Thus said the king, for Menelaus' sake,
Lest him the choice of Diomedes compel.
Again the valiant son of Tydeus spake:
"Friends, if ye bid me mine own thought to tell,
Who now divine Odysseus can excel,
One patient to endure, prepared and stern
In peril, and Athene loves him well?
With him, though fire itself around me burn,
Yet will we come back safe; his wit's edge nought can turn."

29

Then did much-toiled divine Odysseus say:
"O son of Tydeus, neither load men's ear
With praises of my worth, nor on me lay
Aught of dishonour, for all know me here.
But let us forward! The long night's career
Is waning, and the hours with silent theft
Move to unseal the dawn, the stars draw near
Their limit, and of Night's ambrosial web
Two portions are spun out, the third part only is left."

30

Thus they conversing; and then both put on
Arms, and the grimly mail about them wrap.
Brave-hearted Thrasy Mede gave Tydeus' son
A sword two-edged (his own was by mishap
Left at the fleet) and buckler with its strap;
Then laced a plain smooth casque beneath his chin,
Uncrested, plumeless, as it were a cap,
Light to the brows, yet toughly made of skin;
Men wear it in the field, nor is it found too thin.

31

So for Laertes' son did Mériones
A sword, a quiver, and a bow provide,
And, when the hero stood equipped in these,
Made fast upon his brows a helm of hide,
With clamps of leather on the inward side
Bound, as by links of iron; and without
Gleamed of a strong boar, that by hunters died,
The sharp teeth, cunningly set round about;
And padding lay between, of dense wool, folded stout.

32

This was the story of that famous helm.
It first the heirloom of Amyntor was,
In Eleôn of rich Bœotia's realm.
His doors Autolycus, though barred with brass,
Yet brake, and gave it to Amphidamas,
Him of Cythera's isle, and Scandia's town,
Who by free pledge to Molus made it pass.
From him to Mériones his son came down
That helm, whose covering shade did now Odysseus crown.

33

Now when the two brave warriors had put on
Their terrible arms, upon their bold intent
Out toward the camp of Troy they march alone.
Soon on their right hand, by the way they went,
A hern came flying, by Athene sent.
But they beheld not with their eyes the bird,
For darkness of the night all round them bent ;
Only the clangor of its wings they heard.
And gladly Odysseus hailed the omen, as it whirred.

34

And thus he prayed : " O me, divine one, hear,
Who, tossed with labours, still thy care employ !
This night, Athene, hold me yet more dear !
Grant that again we see the ships in joy,
Lords of a great work that shall cumber Troy !"
And after him the son of Tydeus prayed :
" Hear, child of Zeus, whom nothing can destroy,
Me also, as of old thou gavest aid
To Tydeus my great father, when to Thebes he made

35

That journey in the Achaian warriors' name,
Who near Asopus held on camp the land.
He with fair words to Cadmus' children came,
But thence departing a dire mischief planned
With thee, dear goddess, who didst help his hand.
So now me also if thou deign to shield,
A wide-browed heifer shall thy victim stand,
That never hath known yoke or ploughed the field,
A yearling—this to thee, with gilded horns, I yield."

36

Thus they said praying, and Athene heard.
But when the murmur of their prayer was o'er,
On like two lions through the night they stirred
Among strewn arms, piled corpses, and black gore.
Nor yet brave Hector, Priam's son, forbore
To hold from sleep the Trojans, and dilate
Their valour to the flood. He summons bore
To all the honoured men of Troy's estate,
And, when they came together, thus began debate :

37

" Who will arise, and dare to do my quest ?
To this large recompense my hand I bind,
Car and two steeds, in yonder camp the best,
For whoso to this glorious work hath mind—
Even the fleet barks to go near, and find
If men keep guard as ever, or this day's rout
Have cut them down like a destroying wind,
And on the edge of flight they hover about,
Nor on the night set watch, with bloody toil worn out."

38

He ended ; and they all, both young and old,
Sat answerless long time. But there was one
Among them, rich in brass and rich in gold,
Dolon to wit, divine Eumedes' son,
No gallant in his mien, but swift to run,
The only brother he to sisters five.
He now to Hector and the rest begun :
" Me, Hector, doth the soul within me drive
Hard by their ships to venture, and thy quest contrive.

39

" But reach me now the sceptre forth, and swear
The horses, and the car with brass inlaid,
To give me, which the son of Peleus bear;
And Agamemnon's bark I straight invade,
Where the chief captains war or flight persuade."
He ceased : then Hector held it out, and swore :
" Let Zeus, high lord of Hera's bed, be made
My witness, that no Trojan else rule o'er
This car ! Thy glory alone I yield it evermore."

40

False was the oath, but fruitful : Dolon slung
Right deftly on his shoulders quiver and bow,
Round him a cloke of silver wolfskin hung,
Laced the fur casque, and took his spear to go.
Nor was he fated to let Hector know
If by the fleet Achaia drowse or wake.
Down from Troy's fiery camp he sped below,
Nor past divine Odysseus could he make
His road unseen ; who soft to Diomedes spake :

41

" Stop ! from the enemy's camp a man comes near,
Whether to spy our fleet or strip the slain
I know not. Wait, and let us watch from here
Till that he pass a little down the plain.
Then with a rush together can we twain
Hold him in grasp of iron. Or if he,
Too nimble on his feet, elude our train,
We'll wind him off, and head him toward the sea,
Still instant with our spears, lest to the town he flee."

42

So these a little from the path declined,
And lay among the dead, while he ran by
All unaware, till they were left behind
As 'twere a furrow of mules—for they outvie
Steers, when in fallow soil the share they ply.
Then down they swept together—and he stood still,
Hearing a noise beneath the silent sky,
And hoping in his heart, by Hector's will,
Friends, to recal him back, were coming from the hill.

43

But when they came a spear-cast off, or less,
He knew them for his foes, and slipt away
With lithe knees flying: and they behind him press.
As when with jagged teeth two dogs of prey
Hang steadily behind, to seize and slay,
Down the green woods, a wild fawn or a hare,
That shrieking flies them; on his track so lay
Odysseus and the son of Tydeus there,
Winding him out from Troy, and never swerved a hair.

44

At last, when little now remained to run,
Ere mixing with the guards about the gate,
Athena moved the soul of Tydeus' son,
Lest in his striking he be found too late,
And of the deed some other Achaian prate.
Then brandishing aloft his brazen spear,
Cried valiant Diomedes: "Stand and wait,
Or perish where thou art: except thou hear,
My hand trembles behind thee, and thy doom is near!"

45

Then hurling he so ruled his aim, the spear
Whizzed by the neck, then sank into the ground.
He trembling in his teeth, and white with fear,
Stood : from his mouth there came a chattering sound.
They panting, as he wept, his arms enwound.
"Take me alive, and sell me home," cried he ;
"Brass, iron, and fine gold are with me found.
Glad will my father render countless fee,
If living by the ships they bear him news of me."

46

And wary-wise Odysseus spake thereto :
"Take heart! let not the gall of death wring deep
Thy soul ; but tell me this, and tell me true :
How camest thou alone by stealth to creep
In the dark night, when other mortals sleep ?
Or is it in desire to strip the dead ?
Or Hector sent thee forth to prowl and peep
Among our ships ? or thee thy own heart led ?"
And, while his knees yet trembled, Dolon answering said :

47

"Mischief unutterable hath Hector made,
Who with a splendid promise lured my mind,
The Achilleian steeds, and car inlaid.
He bade me in the night leave friends behind,
And seek the camp of hostile men, to find
If they keep guard as ever, or this day's rout
Have cut them down like a destroying wind,
And on the edge of flight ye hover about,
Nor on the night set watch, with bloody toil worn out."

48

He answered with a smile : " No light regard
Is on thee, if thy soul aspire to claim
The Achilleian horses. They be hard
For mortals on the earth to drive or tame,
Save Peleus' son, who of a goddess came.
But come now, tell me this, and tell me clear :
Where Hector and his arms of warlike fame
Thou leftest late, and if his steeds be near,
And of each Trojan hold and outpost let me hear."

49

Son of Eumedes, Dolon, answering spake :
" Now the whole matter will I truly tell.
Hector with all our chiefs doth counsel take,
Past earshot of the noise, on yonder swell,
Hard by the tomb of Ilus. And right well
Our camp is guarded, but in no such kind
As is the care of pacing sentinel
Who watches in the night with sleepless mind,
Nor have relays of men their several charge assigned.

50

" The men of Troy burn fires along the plain,
And all lie briskly alert, because they must.
Each his own neighbour bids from sleep refrain.
But the allied troops slumber ; for they trust
The Trojans to keep guard, and hold it just :
Their children are in Troy, their wives dwell nigh."
Straight in his ear this word Odysseus thrust :
" Do these men, sayest thou, with the Trojans lie,
Or far off in the field ? now mark me, and reply."

51

Son of Eumedes, Dolon, answered then :
“ Now the whole matter will I tell thee true.
Seaward the archers lie, Pæonian men,
The Carians, the divine Pelasgian crew,
The Lelex and the Caucon. Hard in view
Of Thymbra's plain the Lycian hath his lair,
And the steed-taming Phrygians not a few,
And, crested with a plume of horses' hair,
Mæonia's band, and Mysians with their lordly air.

52

“ But why seek more ? If you will try this thing,
Troy's camp to enter, on the borders lie
The troops of Thrace, new-comers, with their king,
Rhesus, the owner of such steeds as I
Till now saw never, who in speed defy
The winds, and are in hue more white than snow ;
His car with gold and silver gleams on high,
And golden are his arms, a wondrous show,
Fit for the gods in heaven, not mortals here below.

53

“ Now bring me to your ships, or leave me here
Bound, till ye prove on peril of my head
If what I utter true or false appear.”
Him Diomedes sternly eyed, and said :
“ Thy good news, Dolon, shall not save thy head.
What if we spare thee, and in time to come
Again thou walk when others are in bed,
Or fight in battle, and bring death to some ?
But the dead hands are feeble, the dead mouth is dumb.”

54

Then Dolon to his beard a suppliant hand
Was lifting: in a breath the keen sword cut
Both tendons of the neck, and in the sand
Down the head rolled ere yet the lips were shut.
Then the grey wolfskin, the bow strung with gut,
The long spear, and the ermine helm they seize;
And to the power who led him from his hut,
Athenè, lady of spoil, Odysseus these
Held out aloft, and cried along the calm night-breeze:

55

"Hail, O divine one, for this glorious prey!
First of Olympian gods thy name in prayer,
First will we ever invoke. Now guide our way,
Yet one point further, to the Thracian lair,
And to the snow-white horses that be there."
Thus cried the chief, and on a tamarisk green
Hung the bright arms, and for a plain mark tare
Reeds from the earth, and stript the branches clean,
Lest in the swift dark night they pass the prize unseen.

56

Then on through arms and plashing gore they trod,
Till by the men of Thrace their feet they stayed.
They worn with toil were sleeping on the sod,
Two steeds by each, and glimmering in the shade
Three file of arms, in beauteous order laid.
And in the midst lay Rhesus, and by him
Fleet stallions on the left, by halters made
Fast to the golden chariot's silver rim.
Then said Odysseus, pointing through the darkness dim:

57

“Lo, Diomede, the horses and the man,
Whom Dolon, ere we slew him, told us of!
Come, put thy best arm forward : let our plan
Stay not for shivering on the brink, but move.
I will unbind the horses, and thou prove
Thy sword on men.” Athene, as he spake,
Filled Tydeus’ son with manhood from above.
Turning about he smote them ; a red lake
Of blood-steamed on the earth, and ghastly groans upbroke.

58

As when a lion falls in raging vein
On flocks that have no shepherd, goats or sheep,
So Diomede went on, till twelve were slain ;
And whom the son of Tydeus in their sleep
Smote, them Odysseus, in his counsel deep,
Still dragged aloof ; for so he held it good ;
Lest, if they trampled on that gory heap,
The long-maned steeds in passing be withstood,
Or backward tremble and start ; for yet they knew not blood.

59

But when the son of Tydeus found the king,
That thirteenth soul, among his liegemen dead,
Died gasping in the night ; so dire a thing
Stood like an evil dream above his bed.
Meanwhile the brave Odysseus loosed, and led,
Still smiting with his bow, from out the throng,
Those fair-maned steeds, (it came not in his head
From the carved seat to lift the shining thong) ;
Then, for a sign, he whistled to his comrade strong.

60

But Diomede stood doubting in his soul
What venture to try next, how far to dare,
If with his hands to drag forth by the pole
That glorious car where the renowned arms were,
Or by main strength to carry it in the air,
Or slay yet hundreds in the camp of Thrace.
But while this matter in his mind he bare,
Athene stood beside him in the place,
And to the hero said in wingèd words apace :

61

“ Now to the hollow ships, O Tydeus’ son,
Remember thy return, lest scared thou go !
Haply some god Troy’s waking hath begun.”
Nor did the chief that voice divine not know,
But quickly scaled the chariot. With the bow
Sharp smitten, from the field the coursers fly.
Nor was the master of the silver bow,
Apollo, keeping a blind watch on high,
When he Athene saw with Tydeus’ son go by.

62

Angered with her the Trojan camp he sought,
And there Hippocoön roused, a lord of Thrace,
Near kin to Rhesus. He, from sleep distraught,
Looked for the steeds, and saw an empty place,
Saw gasping men, like ashes in the face,
And for his dear friend moaning cried anon.
Then clangs and clamour, as they shoaled apace,
Rung from the Trojans, who the grim work done
Viewed, but the doers thereof were to the black ships gone.

63

When they arrived where Hector's spy they caught,
Divine Laertiades drew rein, and leapt
To earth the son of Tydeus quick as thought,
Felt for the gory arms, and with them crept
Back to his friend, and on the chariot stept.
Then did he lash the steeds, and that fleet pair
Straining in tune together seaward swept.
And Nestor first a noise heard in the air,
And listened, and cried out among the captains there :

64

"False shall I speak, or true, ye martial peers ?
But, howsoe'er, my soul I must let free.
A noise of horses rings about my ears,
A noise of hoofs that gallop toward the sea.
Now verily I would that this might be
Odysseus and strong Diomede, who drive
Thus early home their spoil : but fear on me
Falls, lest the glory of Argos not well thrive,
And from Troy's gathering roar they scarce come out alive."

65

Not yet the whole was spoken, when they came,
And from the gleaming chariot leapt anon.
With gentle words all greeted them by name,
And grasp of welcome from each hand they won.
Then Nestor the Gerenian knight begun :
"Now tell me of the steeds, and whence they are,
Thou glorious chief, divine Laertes' son.
Did ye indeed Troy's very camp unbar ?
Or hath a god passed by, and given you steeds and car ?

66

“ On the dim plain they glisten in my sight
Like sunbeams. Daily I bear sword and shield,
Constant in arms, though I am old to fight,
Nor ever shun Troy’s gathering in the field ;
But to mine eyes were never yet revealed
Such horses : on ambrosia they were fed,
Till to your hand some god the gift did yield.
For round you both Heaven’s sire his love doth shed,
And his own child Athene guardeth well your head.”

67

And wary-wise Odysseus answering said :
“ O Nestor, lightly could a god present
Far nobler steeds ; but these are Thracian-bred,
New-comers : and brave Diomedes hath sent
Their master and his twelve most eminent
To Hades : and the spy will make thirteen,
Whom near the barks we captured, as he went
On quest some tidings of our camp to glean,
From where Troy’s chief with Hector on the hill convene.”

68

So saying, athwart the trench the steeds he drave
Proud, and rejoicing came the rest behind,
On to the hut of Diomedes brave.
There they alight, and to the mangers bind
The long-maned stallions, noblest of their kind,
Where champing the sweet corn still rest from toil
The Diomedean horses fleet as wind.
Odysseus on his bark hung Dolon’s spoil,
Gift for Athene’s temple on some chosen soil.

69

Anon both heroes washed from gore and sweat,
There plunging in the sea, neck, knees, and spine.
But with the wave when all their flesh was wet,
And their hearts calm, and they were cooled with brine,
They passed into the bath, and went to dine.
There, with smooth oil anointed, at the board
They lingering sate, and a full bowl of wine
Drew from the choicest that they held in hoard,
And to Athene first a sweet libation poured.

BOOK XI.

1

LEAVING the grand Tithonus, rose up then
Dawn from her couch, the minister of light
To everlasting gods and mortal men.
And Zeus sent Strife, the Achaïans to incite.
She, waving grimly aloft the sign of fight,
Stood on the central monster of the strand,
Odysseus' bark, to shrill both left and right.
Here lay Achilleus moored, the last on land,
There Aias, glorying each in valour and strength of hand.

2

Thus stood the goddess, and on each side rolled
Her spirit-piercing shriek, so dire a yell
That Morning trembled on her throne of gold,
And on the Achaïans a great impulse fell
Ne'er to bate fighting till the foe they quell,
And war seemed doubly sweeter than to sail
Home to the far-off country, loved so well.
Also the king cried arms, and to assail
The Trojans, and himself assumed his shining mail.

3

And in this manner was the king arrayed.
First on his legs he linked the greaves that shone
With clasps of silver, beautifully made ;
Then round his breast the cuirass he put on,
Pledge-gift of Cinyras in years agoe :
For unto Cinyras came even there,
In Cyprus, a great noise beneath the sun,
When first to Troy the Achaians sailing were ;
Therefore he gave this token, for the king to bear.

4

Ten bands of blue enamel striped it o'er,
With twice as many of tin, and twelve of gold.
Blue with enamel on each side it bore
Three flaming serpents, with their necks unrolled,
Crested aloft, like rainbows to behold,
Fast dyed by Zeus, for mortal eyes to ken,
In colours on the cloud. Stud-pierced with gold,
The great sword on his shoulders he flung then,
With silver sheath and golden belt, dazzling to men.

5

Next the man-covering orb he lifted, bright
With brass, ten circles, a great work to view.
There of hard tin gleamed twenty navels white,
And, midmost, one of dark enamel blue.
Graved on the shield an awful Gorgon threw
Dire glances, crowned with panic-fear and wreck.
Bright silver was the loop, and coiled thereto
An azure dragon, whom three heads bedeck,
Three turning diverse ways, all rooted in one neck.

6

Then did his brow the stately helm assume,
Twin-crested on each side, with beavers twain,
Terribly waving the white horse-hair plume.
Last in his hand two spears he grasped amain,
Each with a brass fang tipt, and from the plain
The fire thereof burned even to the sky.
And him beholding from their far domain
Pallas and Hera thundered forth on high,
Honouring Mycenè's king, as he in arms passed by.

7

Each then commanded his own charioteer
Hard by the trench to range the steeds. But they
Dash for the field on foot with helm and spear,
And wild their cry rose in the early day.
Stood by the trench the footmen in array
First, and the cars came after. But the Sire
Stirred an ill noise, and rained an evil spray
Of blood-drops from the heaven, in sign of ire,
For many a hero's soul ere night he would require.

8

Far gleaming on the hill with gold and brass
Also the men of Troy their ranks combine.
Great Hector and renowned Polydamas,
Æneas, in the land as one divine
Held, and three children of Antenor's line,
Strong Polybus, Agenor slow to yield,
And Acamas unwed, of mien divine ;
All these and more were moving in the field,
And Hector mid the first upbore his orbèd shield.

9

As when a star among the clouds of God,
When omens are aloft and signs in air,
Rises in flame, sad ruin to forebode,
Then dips into the dark men know not where ;
So Hector in the van now here, now there
Blazed, and was now lost in the mass behind,
While to the captains in his eager care
He shouted—and again all brazen shined,
Seen like the fire of Zeus in streaming brilliance blind.

10

And as two several lines of men that mow,
Each against other, on a rich man's ground,
Strike the long swaths of wheat or barley low,
And armfuls of the crop fall thickly around ;
So each on other the twain armies bound,
So the red harvest reap, and laugh at flight ;
All even to the line their heads are found ;
Like wolves they rage ; Strife gladdens at the sight,
Alone of all the gods there present in the fight.

11

The rest lay quiet in their halls above,
Each in his own Olympian mansion fair,
And of Kronion mused, but not with love,
What glorious things he would for Troy prepare.
But them the Father held not in his care.
He in a far place from the heavenly train
Sat glorying in his strength, and watched from there
Troy, and the ships of Argos by the main,
And the dire glint of brass, and brave men slaying and slain.

12

While dawn yet lived, and the divine day grew,
So long the brazen hail from man to man
Dashed, and on both sides many warriors slew.
But as the hour came nearing onward, when
Some wielder of the axe in woodland glen,
Tired in his arms with felling lofty trees,
Finds surfeit in his toil, and rests again,
And hunger of sweet food his soul doth seize,
Then Argos with a shout brake down her enemies.

13

First Agamemnon rushed, and laid in blood
Bianor, then his friend and charioteer
Oileus. He from the car leapt, and stood
Full in the path, and in his brows the spear
Sank through the bone and brazen helmet sheer,
And all the brain was shaken up within.
Thus was he tamed. And the king left them here,
Stript of their tunics, and with snow-white skin
Like stars upon the field, and passed, new prey to win.

14

Fierce in a moment he was tearing on ;
Against two sons of Priam a path he clave,
Isus and Antiphus, a bastard one,
One from a lawful bed, two champions brave,
Both in one car ; the valiant bastard drave,
And Antiphus fought near him, chief renowned ;
Whom shepherding their flocks by fountain-wave
On Ida once Achilles caught and bound
With osiers, and let go for worthy ransom found.

15

Now glorious Agamemnon, Atreus' son,
Hurling his spear long-shafted, in the breast,
Between the nipple and neck, smote dead the one ;
Then hand to hand proud Antiphus he pressed,
And by the temple clave, through helm and crest,
With strong sword to the brain ; and down he rolled.
Then, peeling from the dead their mailèd vest,
He knew them for the same led down of old
Captive by swift Achilleus, and released for gold.

16

As when a lion in a fleet deer's lair
Life from her suckling fawns doth lightly rend,
And with strong teeth their tender bowels tear,
While she, though near them, hath no help to lend,
But trembling quails, nor can herself defend ;
Then from the beast's wild rush o'er briar and brake
Flies bathed in sweat, with dappled hair on end—
Thus could for these no Trojan undertake ;
All without helper alike before the Achaians quake.

17

Peisander and Hippolochus the brave,
Sons of Antimachus, who, bribed and bought
With gold by Alexander, his voice gave
To keep back Helen, and so fields were fought—
These next imperial Agamemnon caught,
Both in one car, and at the glittering rein,
Just fallen from their hands, clutching distraught
With terror. Lion-like he rushed amain ;
And from the chariot both cried out in suppliant strain :

18

"Take us alive, O chief! much treasures rare
Stored with Antimachus at home there be.
Silver, brass, gold, elaborate steel is there.
Glad will our father render countless fee,
If living by your ships us twain he see."
Thus they bewailing cried unto the king,
With gentle words; but not so answered he,
Nor mildly in their ears that voice did ring:
"If from the loins of him, Antimachus, ye spring,

19

"He loud in Troy, when on a truce one time
I sent my brother with Odysseus there,
Bade slay him—die now for your father's crime!"
So from the car Peisander down he bare,
Spear-stricken in the breast, and the wide air
Rang with his fall. That other on the bound
To earth he slew, and with his sword did share
Arms, legs, and neck, and like a stone, hewn round,
The gory limbless trunk sent rolling on the ground.

20

Passing from these he dived into the fight,
Where phalanx most on phalanx rolled and rang.
There with him the Achaïans turned to flight
The army of Troy. On footman footman sprang,
And beat out life with many an evil pang;
Horseman on horseman; and thick dust was stirred
From trampling hoofs, and chariots in their clang—
But Agamemnon shouted still the word
Of onset, and in blood swept low the shoaling herd.

21

As when devouring fire hath chanced to find
Some forest of old days, then blown afar
Flares with a dry roar in the rushing wind,
And the trees fall, root, trunk, and branching spar ;
So fall the Trojan heads, and many a car
The proud steeds, hungering for the hand that drives,
Whirl echoing up the windows of the war ;
But knight and charioteer, reft of their lives,
Press the cold earth, more sweet to vultures than to wives.

22

But high Zeus Hector from the darts drew out,
The dust, the blood, the carnage, and the roar,
While the great king still followed with a shout,
To cheer his men. The Trojans streaming pour
Past Ilus' tomb, the fig-tree hill before,
Up the mid field, aiming the town to reach.
And Atreus' son, his fierce hands fouled with gore,
Yelled ; at the last they halt beside the beech,
Hard by the western portals, to give time for each.

23

For through the plain still shoaled the rest, like kine
Scared by a lion in the dead dark night,
A whole herd ; but the hindmost in her chine
Feels his strong claws ; his bloody fangs with might
Her neck crush ; the eyes straining lose their light ;
He falling with her the red blood doth swill,
And laps the entrails warm—so on their flight
Imperial Atreid Agamemnon still
Hung with devouring rage, and did the hindmost kill.

24

Thus ever they shoaled on ; no listless hand
Amazed them ; many a knight and charioteer
Prone or supine fell gasping in the sand,
The harvest of his unendurable spear.
But when the broad town's rampart he came near,
The Sire of gods and men on the chief crest
Of many-fountained Ida sat severe,
And in his hands the naked thunder pressed ;
He golden-feathered Iris sent on this behest :

25

" Away, swift Iris, this to Hector tell,
While Agamemnon he yet sees devour
Troy's host, and hears the ringing of his yell
Still in the front, with backward pace to cower,
Yet bid the rest fight, and abide their hour.
But when the car he seeks, pierced in the fray
With shaft or spear, then Hector shall have power
Clean to the land's last edge to drive and slay,
Till the divine gloom falling shall put out the day."

26

Thus said Kronion, and fleet Iris heard,
And hasted from the height her way to take
To sacred Troy, nor disobeyed the word.
There divine Hector in an opening break
Of battle, with tall Ilion in his wake,
On chariot that with gold and silver shined
Standing she saw. Then near him came, and spake
Fleet Iris, rival of the racing wind :
" O Hector, child of Priam, peer to Zeus in mind,

27

"I come from the great Sire, this word to tell :
While Agamemnon thou shalt see devour
Troy's host, and hear the ringing of his yell
Still in the front, so long retiring cower,
Yet bid the rest fight, and abide their hour.
But when the car he seeks, pierced in the fray
With spear or shaft, then Zeus will give thee power
Clean to the land's last edge to drive and slay,
Till the divine gloom falling shall put out the day."

28

So Iris spake, and on her way flew fast ;
And Hector from his car in arms then sprang,
And both spears waving through the army passed,
Till with new might the gathering war-cry rang.
They rallying wheel, and face with a dire clang
The Achaians, who roll up their files dispersed,
And stand to grip them with a deadlier fang.
Fresh grew the fight, and Agamemnon burst
Far beyond all, right fain of champions to shine first.

29

Speak forth, ye dwellers on Olympus high,
Say, Muses, who the foremost place now won,
Some Trojan whether, or far-famed ally,
To fight with Agamemnon, Atreus' son !
It was Iphidamas, Antenor's son,
In green Thrace bred, which many flocks doth bear,
A tall brave man, whom yet a little one
The father of his mother housed with care
And nurtured, Kisseus, who begat Theano fair.

30

He, when the boy to glorious youth had grown,
Detained him, and his child in marriage gave.
Straight from the bridal chamber he went down,
Chasing the rumour of the Achaians brave,
And twelve beaked ships went with him o'er the wave.
These after in Percotè he left moored,
And with his troops, fair Ilion's town to save,
Marched inland. He it was came now with sword
And glittering spear to meet the mightiest Argive lord.

31

When they were come together, Atreus' son
Missed, for the spear turned off. Iphidamas,
Under the breastplate piercing the strong zone,
Leaned on his spear with heavy hand to pass
The dædal girth : but from the silvered mass
Like lead the point curled. Then did the king seize
And draw home, like a lion, beam and brass,
Wrenching the weapon from his hand with ease,
Then with the sword his neck smote hard, and loosed his knees.

32

So he there fallen slept a brazen sleep,
Ah wretched, helping Troy, from his own bride
Far distant ! No enjoyment could he reap
Of her, for whom such gifts he did provide,
Yea, first, a hundred oxen ; and beside
He promised goats and sheep in equal tale,
A thousand, for his pastures lay so wide.
O'er him did Agamemnon now prevail,
And left him on the plain robbed of his shining mail.

33

This did Antenor's eldest, Coön, mark,
That famous knight, and stood clenching his teeth ;
Rage for his fallen brother his eyes made dark.
He with his spear the king's fore-arm, beneath
The elbow, where no harness covereth,
Smote sidelong, hid from Agamemnon's ken,
And the bright spear-point sank as in a sheath.
There shuddered Agamemnon, king of men,
Yet scorned he to turn back from battle even then.

34

With firm grasp on his wind-devouring spear
He rushed at Coön, who with signal-shout
His brother by the foot was haling clear.
But to his own side as he tugged him out,
The king drave hard beneath the target stout,
And loosed his knees, and then cut off his head.
Thus with the corpses that lay strewn about
The children of Antenor both lay dead,
Each in his hour of doom ; their souls to Hades fled.

35

But he still lashed the enemy like a storm,
With spear and sword and fragments huge of stone,
While from his wound the streaming blood ran warm.
But when the dry hurt stiffened, then came on
Sharp pains, and searched the marrow of Atreus' son ;
Even as a woman in her pains doth feel
The keen dart in her quivering bowels thrown,
When the dread Powers their bitter pangs reveal,
Daughters divine of Hera, who with childbirth deal

36

He the car clomb, and bade his charioteer
Drive to the fleet, yet first shrilled to the host :
“ Friends, captains of the field, bide stedfast here !
Me doth high Zeus compel to quit my post.
Keep ye the war from rolling to the coast ! ”
He spake : his charioteer the lash then plied,
And the fleet horses did their uttermost.
Their breasts ran foam, their flanks with dust were dyed,
As with the king they galloped from war’s raging tide.

37

Then Hector, seeing Agamemnon yield,
To Trojan and to Lycian cried afar :
“ Trojans, and all ye warriors in the field,
Be men, my friends, remember glorious war ;
For Zeus Kronion their best man doth mar,
Nor did I vainly his great help beseech.
Therefore let every man now drive his car
Straight on the foe, yet loftier things to reach.”
Thus Hector cried, and stirred the heart and power of each.

38

As on a lion or a fierce wild boar
Cheers his keen pack the hunter, even so
Hector like Ares did his Trojans pour
Against the Achaians, and himself the foe
Smote beyond all, and laid their legions low.
As when a tempest down the heaven’s highway
O’er the wild wreck-strewn deep doth terribly blow,
Such the man swept. Whom first, whom last did slay
Hector, beloved of Zeus, in that his glorious day ?

39

Aseus, Opites, and Autonoüs,
Dolops, Opheltius, Agelaüs brave,
Æsymnus, Orus, and Hipponoüs,
Chief captains, then the herd to ruin he gave.
As wreaths of cloud, which the dire South updrave,
Roll from the Zephyr when his blast is high,
Large as a hill comes roaring the great wave,
Far as the wind shrieks doth the light foam fly,
So now by Hector's arm innumerable they die.

40

Then were sore plagues and wild despair of men.
Soon to their galleys had they fled like sheep,
But to his friend Odysseus shouted then :
" O son of Tydeus, are we fallen asleep ?
Stand at my side fast ! It will brand us deep,
If white-plumed Hector burn our barks." Then cried
Strong Diomedes : " Yea, my ground I keep ;
Yet shall our joy but little while abide ;
The power of cloud-wrapt Zeus is on the Trojan side."

41

He spake, and from his car Thymbræus flung,
Thrilled with the shafted javelin in his breast.
Odysseus next Molion's knees unstrung.
There on the field they let the corpses rest,
Then moving on the mass their enemy pressed ;
And the noise rolled to heaven. As turn to bay
Two fiery boars, and the fleet hounds arrest,
So these now turning did the Trojans slay,
And glad the Achæians breathed while Hector slacked. But
they

42

Caught next a car, with knight and charioteer,
Sons of that Merops above all men read
In the art of divination, a great seer,
Who bade them oft devouring war to dread,
But they not heeded, by the dark Fates led.
These spear-famed Diomedes, Tydeus' son,
Emptied of all their strength, and smote them dead,
And their illustrious arms took for his own.
Also Odysseus killed two heroes of renown.

43

Lo, then Kronion poised in equal scale
From Ida the grim fight, gazing severe;
Both hurled, both slew, yet ~~neither~~ could prevail.
There Tydeus' child Agastrophus with spear
Smote in the groin, nor were his horses near
(Fate-blinded fool!) to fly with. In the van
Death found him, with his chariot in the rear.
But Hector with keen eye saw slain the man,
And with a yell strode up, and many around him ran.

44

Then Diomedes, quailing in his soul,
Cried to Laertes' son, who near him was:
"Hector and all his plagues against us roll:
Come, let us stand firm in so dire a pass."
Then he the long spear, aiming at the face,
Hurled, nor the helmet missed, but never marred
The fair flesh of the man; for brass met brass,
And slipt awry; such helmet was his guard,
Phœbus Apollo's gift, with three plates moulded hard.

45

Yet Hector sprang back with a measureless bound,
And mingled with the mass, and on his knee
Stooped, leaning with his broad palm on the ground,
And night swam round him that he could not see.
While for his spear along the front went he,
The son of Tydeus, Hector knelt for breath,
But leaping to his chariot presently
Drave out amid the host, and fled black death.
And with his spear rushed up strong Diomede, and saith :

46

"Dog, yet to-day thou livest, and by a hair!
Thank Phœbus for it, who hath saved thy skin,
Phœbus, to whom I know thou makest prayer
When to the noise of spears thou interest in.
Yet will I finish when I next begin,
Then shalt thou die, nor will I twice be foiled,
If I too from a god some help can win.
Now for new prey!" So Diomede recoiled,
And of his fair bright arms Agastrophus despoiled.

47

But Alexander, spouse of Helen fair,
Against the son of Tydeus his bow bent,
While leaning on a pillar builded there,
At Ilus' tomb, that old man eloquent.
The other from the breast now spoiling rent
Of bold Agastrophus, whom late he slew,
The shining mail with many an emblem sprent,
Then from his shoulders did the targe undo,
Last the dire helm unlaced, when Paris the cord drew.

48

Nor from his fingers flew the arrow in vain,
But on the instep of the right foot lit,
And pinned it to the earth. In pleasant strain
He laughed, leapt forth, and did him lightly twit :
“ Ha, son of Tydeus, thou art hit, thou art hit !
’Twas no bad venture : yet I would my bow
Had in thine inmost bowels the barb spit !
Then were the Trojans breathed, whom now with woe,
A lion among goats, thou harriest to and fro.”

49

Whom without fear strong Diomedes addressed :
“ Bow-glorying felon of the virgins’ bower,
If in the field we came to open test,
Then little would thy horn and arrowy shower
Stand to avail thee : but enjoy thine hour !
Yet for this scratch thy glory is somewhat wild,
Which falls upon my foot with no more power
Than if a woman shot me or a child.
Blunt is the dastard’s arrow, and his spear-tooth filed.

50

“ But not thus, when *I* hurl, the keen dart fails :
My very graze is death : if blood be shed,
The cheeks of that man’s wife are dug with nails,
His babes are orphans, he on earth rots dead,
And birds, not women, hover about his bed.”
• Then from his foot, Odysseus standing near,
The barb he drew : pain thrilled him to the head.
So to the car, and bade his charioteer
Drive to the hollow ships—heart-sick, but not with fear.

51

Then was Odysseus left alone, and sighed
Thus to his own great heart in anguish sore :
"Ah woe ! 'tis evil if I backward slide,
Fearing to face dire odds ; and evil more,
If I be taken alone ; for Zeus doth pour
The Danaans over in flight. Yet why debate ?
I know that cowards a lost field give o'er ;
But as for the true warrior, he must wait ;
His work is, slaying or slain, to strongly abide his fate."

52

While in his mind and soul he pondered so,
Fast pouring up the Trojan warriors met,
And hemmed him in the midst, to their own woe.
As dogs and men a fierce wild boar beset,
Who from his deep lair rushing out doth whet
The bright fangs in his jaws, and they stream round ;
Dire is the noise of teeth ; one moment yet
They pause, and wait the fiery monster's bound—
Trojans about him now so many Odysseus found.

53

First on the shoulder Deïopites bold
He struck, next Ennomus and Thoön slew ;
Chersidamas anon to earth he rolled,
And laid him sprawling, in his loins run through,
While from the car he leapt ; then, fired anew,
Left these, and wounded with his spear a man,
Charops, the brother of high Socus, who
Quick to his succour, godlike hero, ran,
And stood beside Odysseus, and in wrath began :

54

“ Desperate in craft and toil, Laertes’ son,
Either two brethren shall be thine to-day
To smite and spoil, and build a boast thereon,
Or with mine own spear will I now thee slay.”
So saying, he hurled; and through the shield made way
The strong lance, driven in fury, and cut clear
The breastplate and the work that o’er it lay,
And from his ribs the very flesh rent sheer,
But from the lungs Athenè turned it off, though near.

55

So then Laertiades Odysseus knew
The wound not mortal, and retiring said :
“ Go, wretched and rash fool, thy daring rue ;
Destruction’s weight hangs toppling o’er thy head !
True, from my knees the power to fight hath fled,
Thine is the vaunt ; yet to thy face I vow
I will not droop until I see thee dead :
This day to chariot-glorying Hades thou
Shalt go down under earth, and me with fame endow.”

56

He spake ; the other turned his back to fly :
But even as he turned the great spear thrilled
His midriff, and he fell. Then with a cry
Stood forth Odysseus, and his boast fulfilled :
“ Child of a knightly sire in combat skilled,
Die, Socus, caught now in the worst of dooms !
No parents seal thine eyelids, but thee killed
Birds shall eat raw, and round thee flap their plumes ;
But me, if even I die, the Achaian host entombs.”

57

This said, he quickly valiant Socus' dart
Drew from his side and bossy orbèd shield,
And the blood gushed, and he was quelled in heart.
But the brave Trojans, clamouring in the field,
Saw the man's blood, and all against him wheeled ;
And he drew backward, and sent forth a cry.
Thrice to the limit of man's voice he pealed ;
Thrice Menelaus heard the shout roll by,
And hurrying then spake to Aias standing nigh :

58

" Aias of Telamon, thy country's guard,
Thrice to me rang much-toiled Odysseus' shout,
So pitched as if the enemy drave him hard,
Alone hemmed in the wild and bloody rout.
Come to his help ! for I am sore in doubt
Lest harm befall him among foes alone,
And there be strong grief when his light goes out."
He spake, and Aias followed, and anon
They found Odysseus wounded, and Troy pouring on.

59

As when the blood-striped jackals of the hill
Hunt with loud yelp a stricken hornèd hart,
Whom a man's arrow pierced, but did not kill,
And the poor wretch bears with him the keen dart,
While blood wells warm, and the knees know their art ;
But when the biting brass his courage ends,
Then the raw-feeding jackals tear apart
And gorge him in the forest ; but God sends
An awful lion, and they fly scattering, and he rends—

60

So round that valiant and wise-hearted knight
Troy gathered in full cry, to work him wrong,
Yet still Laertiades upheld the fight,
And foiled them with his spear, though many and strong ;
But Aias with his towery orb ere long
Came, and stood near him, and Troy scattering fled
This way and that, while from the terrible throng
Brave Menelaus by the hand him led,
Till came his charioteer, and from the field he sped.

61

Aias the while first wounded Pandocus,
Then slew Doryclus, Priam's bastard son,
Lysander hit, Pylartès, Pyrasus.
As from the hills a torrent stream doth run,
Fed by the rain of Zeus and whirling on
Dry pine along the lowlands and torn oak,
And all earth's scouring to the sea bears down,
So through the loud plain, amid dust like smoke,
Troy with her steeds and men illustrious Aias broke.

62

But Hector knew not of it yet, nor caught
The rumour, where along the winding bank
Of stream Scamander on the left he fought.
There thickliest far the heads of heroes sank,
There pealed unutterably in front and flank
Round Nestor and Idomeneus the strain
Of battle ; and Hector in the foremost rank
Did furiously, and thinned the Achaian train,
In spear-craft noble alike and mastery of the rein.

63

Yet not less the divine Achaïans there
Had still prevailed each onset to repel ;
But Alexander, spouse of Helen fair,
Did glorying in his march Machaon quell,
Shot with a three-tongued arrow timely well
In the right shoulder ; and for his dear sake
A sore damp on the bold Achaïans fell,
Lest him in the ebb of war the enemy take.
Idomeneus anon to valiant Nestor spake :

64

“ O Nestor, son of Neleus, great in war,
Up, mount, and drive Machaon to the beach,
Nor let thy strong team linger in the car !
More than a hundred laymen is one leech.”
He spake : and the old knight obeyed his speech,
And the car mounted, and Machaon drew,
Son of Asclepius the world-famous leech,
Beside him ; and the horses readily flew
Down to the hollow ships, when they were turned thereto.

65

But, where he rode with Hector, Kébriones
Lifted his eyes, and saw the Trojan wrack,
And cried : “ O Hector, we lose time with these,
Here on the skirts of battle ; far less slack
Our friends fly yonder, huddling in close pack ;
And Telamonian Aias at their heels
(I know him by the broad shield on his back)
Rolls mischief—thither let us turn our wheels,
Where men and cars storm most, and the divine cry peals.”

66

So saying, he smote the long-maned fiery team,
And the lash cracked and whistled; and they sped
With proud hoofs to the roll of the mid stream
Of combat, trampling shields and heroes dead.
All underneath the axle was dyed red
With plashed gore, and the rails about the seat
With blood-drops, from the chariot-harness shed,
Were dabbled, and a shower of crimson sleet
Came from the fellied wheels and galloping horses' feet.

67

There on the mass brave Hector longed to leap,
And break them: little did he leave undone,
When with a terrible noise he sprang to reap
The sheaves of battle with spear, sword, and stone;
But shunned the assault of Aias Telamon:
Whom yet the Father smit with fear, and he
Glaring amaze, with shield behind him thrown,
Stood like a hunted beast, or turned to flee
A little and a little, changing knee for knee.

68

As when a fierce-eyed lion from the stall
Is driven by dogs and men, who all the night
Watch, nor fat beeves will let him taste at all,
And he comes bold with hunger, yet his might
Avails not, for so deep the javelins bite,
By strong wrists hurled, and firebrands scare him out,
And sulkily in the morning he takes flight—
So Aias from the Trojans turned about,
And with grim soul drew backward, for the ships in doubt.

69

Or as an ass, whom many are wont to beat,
And split strong cudgels, overpowering boys
Walks in his own road to a field of wheat,
And crops the fat tilth, and his fare enjoys,
With ribs belaboured to less hurt than noise,
Till, crammed with comfort in his paunch, he goes—
So Telamonian Aias there employs
Himself the full might of an army of foes, [blows
Who din with spears the shield, and cumber his back with

70

Now would the man remember furious strife,
And wheel round on the Trojans, and force back
Their phalanx, and now turn and flee for life,
Yet foil them ever of the coastward track,
Standing between his friends and Troy's attack.
And many a spear, by strong wrist hurled, defaced
The huge round shield, and many their aim lack,
And in the earth, as he retiring paced,
Stick without fruit, though yearning his white flesh to taste.

71

Him saw Eurypylus, and came, and flung,
And through the reins and liver the bright spear
Tore Apisaon, and his knees unstrung.
But godlike Alexander, who stood near,
Beheld Eurypylus despoiling there
The dead form, and an arrow from the bow
Shot; in the man's right thigh the reed snapt sheer,
And galled him, and he drew back pained and slow,
Yet shouting to the Danaans as he left the foe:

72

"O captains, friends, wheel round, and ward off death
From Aias stormed with weapons. Hardly, I say,
Will this day's uproar let him out with breath.
Firm, fast by Telamonian Aias stay!"
So cried Eurypylus, sore pierced; and they
Shoulder to shoulder raised a roof entire
Of shields, with each lance lifted; and away
Came Aias, breathing after dangers dire.
So down the plain they toiled, and fought like burning fire.

73

But the Neleian mares fled, bathed in foam,
With Nestor and Machaon: whom espied
Achilleus from his bark; for there he clomb
War's labour to behold and tearful tide.
Thence with a loud voice to his friend he cried,
And soon like Ares from his place anon
(Evil the hour to him!) Patroclus hied.
Then first began Mencetius' warlike son:
"Achilleus, here am I: what needeth to be done?"

74

And answering him the swift Achilleus said:
"Friend of my soul, divine Menœtiades,
Hard unendurable woes around them spread;
Soon will the host come suppliant to my knees.
But go, ask Nestor why his chariot flees,
And whom he brings out wounded from the fight.
As for the features, I beheld not these,
The mares went by me in such furious flight;
In all else the man seemed Machaon to my sight."

75

He spake: Patroclus his dear friend obeyed,
And by the sounding margin of the main
Swift to the Argive camp his journey made.
Meanwhile, arrived at Nestor's hut, they twain
Dismounted from the chariot to the plain.
Eurymedon, the old man's servant, there
Unbound the harness, and they standing drain
The sea-breeze, and from sweat their tunics air,
Then with desire of rest into the hut repair.

76

Their drink the fair-haired Hecamede mixed,
Whom, when Achilleus took the sacred land
Of Tenedos, the Achaians portion fixed
Of Nestor; for his mind best counsels planned,
All else surpassing: now with zealous hand
She, brave Arsinoüs' child, the table fair
Placed, azure-pillared, and the brazen stand
Set, and for seasoning of the draught laid there
An onion, and fresh honey, and barley-cake forth bare.

77

Next, a rich goblet of rare form and mould,
Which from his Pylian home the old man bore,
She laid anear them, set with studs of gold,
And beautifully graced with handles four,
Each with two golden pigeons feeding o'er,
Each planted on two stems, exceeding bright.
Scarce could another lift with labour sore
That cup when full: old Nestor thought it light.
She, divine maid, herein their beverage mixed aright:

78

First Pramnian wine she poured, and o'er it then
Scraped cheese of goats, and crumbled the white cake,
And gave, and bade them drink it: and the men
Their fiery thirst with eager quaffing slake,
And, after drinking, pleasant converse take.
And lo, Patroclus came; and from his seat
The old man rose, and led him in, and spake,
Desiring him to sit, for drink and meat.
And he would not, but answered, standing on his feet:

79

"No sitting here for me, thou brave old knight!
Awful is he that sent me forth to learn
Whom thou hast brought back wounded from the fight.
Plain is it now; for I myself discern
Machaon, and with tidings must return,
Not tarrying, to the hut from whence I ran.
For, brave old knight, thou know'st thyself how stern
Achilleus is, nor doth he wait to scan
Fault, but is ready and quick to blame a blameless man."

80

Answered Gerenian Nestor: "Why then, why
Should great Achilleus mourn us, or care what
Falls on Achaia's children?—Let them die!
What pain is in the army he knows not.
Our best lie pierced; strong Diomede is shot;
Odysseus and the king did wounded fall;
So too Eurypylos; this other I got,
Hurt by the archers, home—yet, filled with gall,
That strong man silent sits, and hath no pity at all.

81

“ Or will he wait till roaring fire bereaves
The Argives of their ships beside the sea,
And we crowd helpless, and are slain in sheaves?
For my strength is not what it used to be
(O that it were!) in those old days, when we
Waged feud with Elis about lifting kine,
And with Itymoneus I fought, and he
Fell, of Hypeirochus the child divine,
By spear-cast in our foray, and the hand was mine.

82

“ He for his own herds fighting in the van
Died, and the rustic people trembled sore.
Quick from the plain we gather all we can,
Kine fifty droves, of sheep as many more,
So many of swine, of goats an equal store,
Thrice fifty chestnut mares, and not a few
With foals—and all these we to Pylos bore
By night; and Neleus gladdened at the view
Of the vast wealth I conquered, though to arms but new.

83

“ But when the rosy-fingered Morning shined,
Then did the heralds with shrill voice proclaim,
For all men to come near, and payment find,
Who could from sacred Elis a debt name.
So then the leaders of the Pylians came
With speed together, to count up the prey,
And forthwith made division of the same;
For against Elis many a charge there lay,
While we were poor and few, and shaken with decay.

84

“ For in the former years we were brought low
And stricken by the power of Heracles,
And thus our noblest were slain long ago.
Twelve sons had Neleus, and eleven of these
Fate in the field cast down, and loosed their knees ;
I only was alive, and all else died.
Then, filled with joy at our calamities,
The brazen-mailed Epeians us defied,
And sinned far against Pylos in their hour of pride.

85

“ Therefore the old man chose a herd of kine,
And shepherds with their flock, three hundred sheep.
For he had lost in Elis the divine
Four stallions and a car, nor held them cheap.
He to the races, a fair prize to reap,
Had sent them, and Augeias, king of men,
Thrust back the driver, and the steeds did keep.
Wroth for these words and deeds, old Neleus then
Chose much wealth, and the rest gave to the Pylian men.

86

“ We then the spoil divided, and due rites
Paid to the heavenly gods. On the third day
Horses and chariots and a cloud of knights
Came fast from Elis to win back the prey,
With Actor's twin sons harnessed for the fray,
Young, not familiar with the peal of war.
There stands a high town Thryos, a long way
Up stream Alphetis, and from Pylos far;
And about this they camped, her mighty towers to mar.

87

"But when their troops were covering all the plain,
By night from heaven with cry to arms then slid
Athene, and the land, not loth, but fain,
Rose at her call. But Neleus me forbid,
Kept back my chariot, and my horses hid,
'For grim war,' said he, 'dost thou not yet know.'
Yet all our mounted warriors I outdid,
I there on foot outdid them even so.
Such was Athene's will: she made the fight thus go.

88

"Hard by Arenè to the deep sea rolls
The Minyan river: there for dawn we wait,
We knights, and thither footmen come by shoals.
Thence, clad with arms, till noon we march elate,
And by Alpheüs stream our journey bate;
There to Kronion a rich offering pay,
And there Alpheüs and Poseidon great
Each with a bull we honour that same day,
And to Athene last an unyoked heifer slay.

89

"At evening through the camp we feeding messed
By squadrons, and along the river stream
Each in his glittering arms lay down to rest.
Meanwhile the men of Elis at their scheme
Wrought, and to sack the town with bale extreme
Stood round it. But a great work met their sight.
For when the sun rose, and with lengthening beam
Spread through the land, we, praying to the might
Of lord Zeus and Athene, clanged together in fight.

90

"There in the Pylian onslaught first I slew
Mulius, the great war-captain, and obtained
His horses, and the chariot which they drew.
This chief Augeias' eldest daughter gained
(Who all drugs knew, that the wide earth contained)
In marriage, Agamedea. This same man
My javelin smote, and in his breast remained.
Prone in the dust he tumbled, and I ran,
And on the chariot leapt, and dashed into the van.

91

"Then fled the brave Epeians left and right
Scattering when they beheld that leader fall,
Their captain of the cars, and best in fight.
I like a whirlwind sweep, their ranks appal,
Take fifty chariots, and two heroes tall
From each cast headlong, and they bite the ground.
Nor had the twins Actorian 'scaped at all,
But the Earth-shaker, their great sire renowned,
Caught them himself from battle, and with a mist enwound.

92

"There Zeus great victory to Pylos gave.
Far through the ample plain we follow and kill,
And the fair arms upgather. On we drave
To the Buprasian fields, nor pause until
The rock Olenian and Aleisius' hill
We reach : there Pallas turned us homeward, when
I of their last man did the life-blood spill.
Back we ride swift to Pylos ; and all then
Praise Zeus among the gods, and Nestor among men.

93

“ Such lived I once, or never lived at all,
I ; but Achilleus will let no man reap
Joy from *his* worth :—when many fighters fall,
At last, too late, will he in anguish weep.
O my belovèd, doth thy heart yet sleep
Forgetful of the word Menœtius said
In that day when he sent thee o’er the deep
From Phthia ; and we twain before him fed,
I and divine Odysseus, and heard all he said ?

94

“ For we had come to Peleus’ mansion fair,
In travel through Achaia far and wide,
To raise men ; and we found Menœtius there,
And thee too, and Achilleus at thy side.
Old Peleus to the Sire an ox fat-thighed
Was burning in the court ; a golden cup
Flamed in his hand, as he the offering dyed
With dark wine ; and the flesh, whereon to sup,
Thou with thy friend wast handling, as we two came up.

95

“ There by the gate we stood ; Achilleus ran,
And led us by the hand, and gave a seat,
And food, and all the kindness a host can.
But when no more we cared to drink and eat,
Then I began you also to entreat,
And ready were ye both, in mind and ear,
And both the elders gave much counsel meet.
This to his son the old knight Peleus there
Charged, to be always first, and others overpeer.

96

“ And to thee said Menœtius, Actor’s son :
‘ My child, Achilleus is indeed far best
In birth and valour, but thy years outrun
His ; point a word in season, and suggest
Good counsel ; he will hear thee, and be blest.’
Such were his cares, but thou hast let them go.
Plant but this word yet in Achilleus’ breast,
And thou with God may’st turn him, who can know ?
For a friend’s voice is good, nor his persuasion slow.

97

“ But if the warning of a god he flee,
And if his mother somewhat to him spake
From Zeus, I say let him at least send *thee*,
With all his clansmen following in thy wake,
That yet some light may on the Danaans break ;
And lend thee his bright arms to bear in field,
If so the Trojans thee for him mistake,
And to our beaten ranks a respite yield ;
For by a little breath an army is often healed.”

98

He ended, and the other turned his feet
Swift to Achilleus, and made haste to run.
But when he came before Odysseus’ fleet,
Where councils are convoked and justice done,
Where the gods’ altars stand, Euæmon’s son
Eurypylus he met, with wounded thigh
Now limping from the war : the sweat ran down
From head to waist, nor was the blood yet dry,
But bubbling from the wound ; yet still his heart was high.

99

And him Patroclus pitied, and in tears
Thus to the man did wingèd words employ :
“ O miserably undone, ye Danaan peers,
How were ye fated, far from home and joy,
With your white flesh to glut the dogs of Troy !
Yet brave Eurypylus, declare, I pray,
Will Hector be repelled, or now destroy
And blot the Achaians from the light of day ? ”
And in reply, sore hurt, Eurypylus did say :

100

“ Lo, the last hope, divine Patroclus, slips
Now from the Argives : they will fall and die.
For all our best lie wounded in the ships,
And Troy’s great onset waxes yet more high.
But bring me to the bark, and from my thigh
Cut forth the arrow, and the gore and dust
Cleanse with warm water, and soft balms apply
Which Chiron taught, of Centaurs the most just,
To Peleus’ son, who thee did with the same entrust.

101

“ For Podalirius and Machaon, each,
Are absent—one within the camp, I trow,
Much needing for himself an able leech ;
The other in the plain yet fronts the foe.”
To him Patroclus answered : “ How then so,
Brave captain, can I do ? that scarce may be :
For to Achilleus’ hut behold I go,
To say to him what Nestor said to me :
Yet in thy pain e’en thus will I not turn from thee.”

102

This said, beneath the chieftain's breast he wound
His arm for help, and led him to the hut.
The servant, when he saw them, on the ground
One ox-hide o'er another smoothly put.
There was he laid full length. Patroclus cut
The arrow from his thigh, and the black gore
Laved with warm water, and a bitter root
Bruised in his hands, and laid it on the sore,
To heal him: the pain ceased, and the blood came no more.

B O O K X I I.

1

THUS in the camp Menœtius' noble son
Eurypylus was healing. And yet fought
Argos and Troy together blent in one,
Till the great wall and trench the Danaans wrought
For safeguard of their ships, availed them nought.
They builded high, dug deep, and never paid
Gift to the gods. There barks and spoil they brought
For shelter. Against heaven their wall was made,
Their trench dug: and the work for no long season stayed.

2

While Hector was alive, and Peleus' son
Lay angered at the ships, and Priam king
Dwelt in the land, nor Ilion was undone,
So long the great wall seemed a steadfast thing.
But when the dark Fate came with evil wing,
And all the Trojan valiantest were dead,
Much Argives slain and some continuing,
And in the tenth year Troy with ruin spread,
And home to their dear land in ships the Achaians fled—

3

Then did Apollo and Poseidon scheme
That wall to level, turning in thereon
The strength of rivers that from Ida stream,
And in a gathering deluge made them run,
Rhesus and winding Rhodius blent in one,
Granicus and Æsapus and divine
Scamander, and thee, Simoïs, where the sun
On helmet and strewn shield was wont to shine,
And bleach the bones of men, half gods, a peerless line.

4

These from their mouths Apollo turned, and set
Their torrent to the wall nine days ; and Zeus
Rained, that the waters might come faster yet ;
Poseidon with his trident drifting loose
All that the Argives planted firm for use,
Each beam and stone like stubble in the main,
By rolling Hellespont with sand profuse
Rased out the wall, and turned the streams again,
Each in his olden course to beautify the plain.

5

Thus would Apollo and Poseidon wreak
Their vengeance on the wall in after hours ;
But round it now the battle-thunders break,
And beat with noise the timbers of the towers.
Lashed by the fire of Zeus the Argive powers,
Cooped at the barks, like sheep within the fold,
Quail at the sound of Hector who devours,
Fierce as before, their ranks beneath him rolled ;
His wheels are like a whirlwind that no barriers hold.

6

As when a lion or a strong wild boar
Turns on the dogs and hunters, filled with ire,
And in a column the men stand and pour
Their rain of javelins, nor will he retire
Or tremble, but is slain by his own fire ;
Oft he wheels round to try the square of men,
And where he rushes, from each onset dire
Still they give back—so Hector doubling then
Drave to o'erleap the trench, entreating loud his men.

7

But the fleet horses would not. Shrill they neighed,
There stammering at the brink, so wide and deep
The dark throat of the trench their soul dismayed,
'Twas no light thing to pass or overleap,
So beetling were the banks and deadly steep,
Toothed at the ridge with many a pointed pale
Set firm and strong to guard the castled keep,
Where fleet horse never could with car avail
To enter ; only on foot men thirsted to assail.

8

At last Polydamas came near and spake :
“ O Hector, and ye captains, 'twere fools' play
To try the trench with horses : pile and stake
Will tear us, and the wall is in our way,
Hard ground for charioteers. If Zeus, I say,
Mean Argos to wipe out and Troy befriend,
'Twere grand to sweep like lions on our prey,
To dash straight on the wall and make an end,
That none from now surviving to Achaia wend.

9

“ But if the tide must turn, if yet there be
Change in the war, and rallying they pursue
Us floundering in the trench, it seems to me
Not one man shall escape of all our crew
To bear the tidings. But this hear and do :
Leave men to guard our horses at the trench,
And we with arms will follow Hector through,
And doubt not but the Achaians will soon blench
And fall, if verily now Fate hold them in her clench.”

10

Thus spake Polydamas ; and Hector heard
Right gladly the good counsel, and sprang out
Armed from his chariot, and obeyed the word.
Nor did the other Trojans gather about
With horses, seeing on foot their captain stout,
But all to earth leapt ; and his charioteer
Each knight bade hold, beyond the trench without,
His steeds in order : they with shield and spear,
Parted in five, their way behind the leaders steer.

11

With Hector and Polydamas went all
The best in valour, and most fain to mar
The fleet with fire when they had stormed the wall ;
And with them Kébriones ; one worse in war
Hector had left behind to keep his car.
Paris, Agenor, and Alcathoüs
Led the next cohort. With the third not far
Came Helenus and fair Deïphobus,
And, with his fiery steeds, Arisbian Asius.

12

Æneas led the fourth, Anchises' son ;
With him Archelochus and Acamas,
Antenor's ; and Sarpedon last led on
The allies ; with him Asteropæus was,
And Glaucus ; these he thought in power to pass
All save himself ; he everywhere shone first.
Then with knit shields they formed, and mass by mass
Rolled onward, vaunting that the enemy durst
Seek but the ships in flight, now straitened to the worst.

13

There all the Trojans and far-famed allies
Polydamas obeyed, save only one,
Asius Hyrtacides ; who scorned, unwise,
To leave his car, but to the fleet right on
Drave glorying in his steeds, yet could not shun
Death, nor again come back to windy Troy.
For brave Idomeneus, Deucalion's son,
First with the javelin did his life destroy,
And dark Fate veiled his eyes, and cut him off from joy.

14

For to the left he drave, where still the foe
Thronged hurrying from the plain with steed and car ;
Fierce by that road he made his horses go,
Nor found the gates shut, nor with bolt and bar
Defended, but by guards held open far,
On chance to save one flying to the fleet.
There Asius drave, and with loud yells of war
His men came after, boasting now to beat
The Achæians to their ships in uttermost defeat.

15

There they beheld two warriors in the gate ;
Sons were they both of spear-armed Lapithæ ;
One, of Peirithoüs, Polypoetes great,
And one Leonteus, peer to Ares he.
These twain before the gates stood knee to knee,
Moveless and firm as two great oaks that tower
In mountains of the north where eagles be,
And all their days endure the wind and shower,
Folding their roots together in eternal power.

16

These, trusting in their strength and good right hands,
The coming of the child of Hyrtacus
Await, six captains with their armed bands,
Asius, Orestes, and Iamenus,
And Thoön, Adamas, CEnomaüs,
As to the wall with lifted shields they drew,
Mid yells of triumph. But the twain e'en thus
Stood shouting to their friends to wheel anew,
And for the ships fight hard, ere utter ruin ensue.

17

All this within the gates : but when they saw
The Trojan charge, and heard the Danaan wail,
Out the twain rushed, and by the portal's jaw
Fought, as wild boars that hear amid the gale
The sound of dogs and hunters on their trail,
Then with a sidelong rush the copses break
And rend off at the root ; from hill to vale
The grindings of their teeth wild noises make,
Till with the spear at last some marksman their life take ;

18

Such were the grindings of the brazen proof
That met the brazen hail about their breast ;
So fierce they fought, confiding in the roof
Of warriors overhead, though direly prest,
And in their own right hands. From the wall's crest
And battlemented tower a deadly sleet
Of stones came falling without pause or rest,
Hurled from men's hands that yet in sore defeat
Fought for themselves, their camp, and the swift-sailing fleet.

19

As when to earth come down the flakes of snow
Whirled by a strong wind from a pile of cloud,
And on a sudden the broad plain below
Is covered with a white and misty shroud,
So came a ceaseless volleying from each crowd
Of fighters, and with many a millstone weight
Dry clashed the helmets, and the shields rang loud.
Then Asius groaning smote his thighs for hate,
And in high words with Zeus did bitterly debate :

20

" O father Zeus, of lying lips thou art !
I said the Achaians could not 'scape to-night
Our unendurable hands and fiery heart.
And lo ! like bees, or slim wasps quivering bright,
That build their houses on a rock-rough site,
Nor leave their hollow nest, but still remain,
And against spoilers for their children fight,
So from the gate these will not, though but twain,
Turn or a foot-breadth yield, till they be taken or slain."

21

So Asius in his wrath ; but not for this
Moved he the spirit of high Zeus, who sought
Hector to raise, and make the glory his.
Then Polypœtes with sharp javelin caught
Bold Damasus : with brass-cheeked helm he fought,
Nor could that metal keep the strong spear out,
But to the bone it clave regarding nought,
And all the brain within was shaken about.
Then Ormenus he slew and Pylon, warriors stout.

22

Also Leonteus, branch of Ares, slew
Hippomachus, full timely in the zone
Pierced with a brazen javelin. Then he drew
His sharp sword from the scabbard, and alone
Made for Antiphates, who, soon o'erthrown,
Fell backward to the earth and swooning died.
Quick with the rest lay valiant Menon strewn,
Iamenus, Orestes, side by side ;
All to the earth fell broken in their comely pride.

23

While thus before the gate, that none might pass,
Fight the strong Lapithæ, and strip with ire
Their slain foes, Hector and Polydamas
Lead the chief band and best, who most desire
To break the wall and burn the ships with fire.
Now standing at the trench they pause anew ;
Their men speak nothing, but with eyes enquire,
In doubt and hesitation what to do ;
For, even as they would cross, a bird of omen flew.

24

It was an eagle flying far in air,
That came upon their left and held them back.
Twined in his talons a huge snake he bare,
All dashed with crimson, nor did life yet lack,
Nor writhing rage and memory of attack.
For darting at the throat, with neck declined,
It stung him, and dire pain his soul did rack ;
Cast mid the crowd he left his prey behind,
Then with a clang went off along the rolling wind.

25

And all the Trojans, when they saw the snake
Thus lying in their midst, a sign of Zeus,
Quailed, and Polydamas to Hector spake :
“ Hector, with me thou never canst hold truce,
Nor turn my good words to a noble use ;
Since for a popular man to stir his lips
In camp or council is without excuse.
Firm must thy power be held, whatever slips.
Yet will I speak : go not to battle at the ships !

26

“ For plain the end is, if indeed it were
For omen the bird came, our march to break,
Even this eagle, flying far in air,
That leftward passed and made the people quake,
While in his talons writhed a blood-red snake
Alive, that stung him ; and, with deadly thrill
Pierced, he the prey did from his feet then shake,
And with a clang went off, but not to fill
The faint mouths of the nestlings on his native hill—

27

"So we, albeit we break down and mar
Their gates, their tower-embattled keep, and maim
Achaia with our strength, shall yet be far
From honour, and go back the way we came
Leaving full many a Trojan here in shame
Dead, whom the Argives fighting for their fleet
Shall hack with brass. A seer would say the same,
Who to interpret signs were not unmeet,
One that can learn men truth, and guide the people's feet."

28

Him white-plumed Hector sternly eyed, and said :
"No more, Polydamas, thy lips bestow
Words that I love, to make us turn for dread :
Some better counsel thou must surely know.
But if from a true heart thou speakest so,
The eternals, smiting with their evil rod,
Have marred thy mind, who bidd'st me to let go
What high Zeus, what the thunder-loving god
Told me in words himself, and sanctioned with his nod.

29

"Thou to thy shame wouldst have me put my trust
In long-winged creatures, in the fowls of air,
Whom I regard not, but condemn like dust,
Which way soever, left or right, they fare,
Eastward to Dawn, or westward to the lair
Of Darkness. But let *us* with all our might
Cleave to great Zeus and hear him, who doth bear
All nature in his hand, all depth and height :
There is but one best omen—for our land to fight.

30

“ And as for battle and the blasts of death,
What need hast thou to tremble or wax cold ?
Though by the fleet all else lie void of breath,
Fear not : *thy* safety may be well foretold ;
Not firm thy heart is, nor of fiery mould.
Yet from the battle if thou swerve this day,
Or by vain words another’s feet withhold,
Then, for thy guerdon, by this spear, I say,
Thy life in that same moment shall be taken away.”

31

So saying, he led their march ; and they behind
Troop with divine noise. And the Lord of heaven
From Ida sent a rolling storm of wind,
And to the fleet in clouds the dust was driven.
Then the heart melted and the reins were riven
Of the Achaians ; but for Troy new day
Dawned, and each warrior felt the strength of seven.
Thus, in the power of Zeus confiding, they
To burst the embattled wall made terrible essay.

32

Fierce at the breastwork still they dashed, and tore
The long tiers of the towery-crested height,
And the broad buttress-piles, sunk in before
To bind in one mass the huge bulk aright,
They toiled to lever up with main and might,
Hot to break down the Achaian wall. Nor yet
The Danaans bated earth or flagged in fight,
But ox-hide shields along the rampart set,
And their o’er-mastering foes shot from the parapet.

33

There both Aiantes moving on the wall
Now with hard words, now mild, aroused each breast :
“ Look, friends and warriors, here is work for all ;
Good, bad, and middling men, rise, do your best !
Let none turn shipward, let no yells arrest
Your courage, but drive on with mutual cheer,
If the great Thunderer let us mar their quest,
And hurl them to their homes in panic fear !” [and near.
Thus through the fight they moved, with strong shouts, far

34

As the dense snow-flakes on a winter's day
Fall, when the Father hath ris'n up to snow,
Revealing his white arrows, and doth lay
All winds in sleep, and pouring fast below
On mount and promontory his mantle throw,
O'er the wide lotus-fields and chill sea-sand,
Farm and grey haven, to the bordering flow ;
There the surf melts it, but the whole mainland [hand—
Fades in the storm, when Zeus hath launched it from his

35

Mixed in the air, men hurling to destroy,
Such were the showering stones on each side flung ;
Troy lashed Achaia, and Achaia Troy,
And a dire noise about the rampart rung.
Nor yet brave Hector with his troops had sprung
The gates, the massive bar, and leapt the line,
But wary Zeus, when the fight doubtful hung,
Sent forth Sarpedon his own son divine,
Like, in the Argive ranks, a lion among kine.

36

Holding his shield before him, he passed on,
That beauteous orb, brass-welded in the fire,
Lined thick with layers of ox-hide, stitched and sewn
Round the rim's length with rods of golden wire ;
This holding in his front, two lances dire
He brandished, and went ravening in full sweep
Like some starved lion that comes mad with ire
Down from his native hills to spoil the sheep,
And finds a barred-up fold, and dares against it leap ;

37

Yea, though the herdsmen at their post he find
Guarding the flocks with many a hound and spear,
Not for one moment doth he pause in mind,
Or deign to be put off and fly for fear,
But bounds into the midst and rends off clear
His mangled prey, or even himself doth take
The javelin in his heart—so raging here
To mount the high wall and the parapet break,
Now burned divine Sarpedon, and to Glaucus spake :

38

“ O Glaucus, wherefore is it that we twain
Have still been wont all others to outshine
In Lycia, leaders of the banquet-train,
Graced with more meat and princelier cups of wine,
And in the land men count us for divine ?
And wherefore is it that we hold in fee
That beautiful estate with slopes of vine,
Rich fields of waving corn and pasturing lea,
Down the fair banks of Xanthus, far and wide to see ?

39

“ Why but for this, that we should stand in might
First of all Lycians at the hour of need,
And bear with a calm brow the flames of fight ;
That so the people may find cause indeed
To say : ‘ Our captains, that in Lycia lead,
Are not inglorious men, to drink all day
Choice wine for nought, and on our fat things feed,
But power is in them, they love heroes’ play,
And of the Lycians still march foremost in the fray.’

40

“ O my belovèd, if through endless years,
This war once over, we could rest and thrive
Ageless and deathless, without pain or tears,
Neither would I go first myself to strive
In arms, nor thee to glorious battle drive :
But now that myriad deaths about us wait,
Whence none by flight can save his soul alive,
And all men upon earth must yield to fate—
Forward, till one smite us, or we on him rise great !”

41

Then Glaucus heard ; and the twain rushed in power,
Leading the Lycians. And Menestheus saw
And shuddered, as they rolled against his tower ;
Then peered in terror, doubting whence to draw
Help, and like lions red in tooth and claw
The Aiantes marked, and Teucer standing nigh,
But shouted all in vain to whom he saw,
So dire a clang pealed up and shook the sky,
From shields and battered helmets, with fair crests waving high,

42

And from the gates, for every bar was fast,
And loud the Lycians smote to make them fall :
Therefore he sent the herald in fierce haste :
“ Run now, divine Thoötes, Aias call !
Or bring both rather—that were best of all—
Ere havoc and wild rout devour us here.
For lo, the Lycian captains at our wall
Beat like a tempest, and great deeds of fear
Come with them as of old in their enraged career.

43

“ But if the blast of battle round them rear,
If they themselves have bloody work to do,
At least then bring me in a strait so sore
Aias of Telamon, or if but two,
Add Teucer with his bow, that marksman true.”
Thus spake the son of Petaüs, nor the man
Paused, but obeyed him when the word he knew,
And by the brazen-mailed Achaians ran
Till the bold chiefs he found, and instantly began :

44

“ O leaders of the host, Aiantes twain,
You doth the child of kingly Petaüs call,
Though ye should strike but once and turn again,
To help him in his toil ere worse befall :
Both would he rather—that were best of all—
Lest havoc and wild rout devour him sheer.
For there the Lycian captains at the wall
Beat like a tempest, and great deeds of fear
Move with them as of old in their enraged career.

45

“ But if the blast of battle round you roar,
If ye yourselves have bloody work to do,
Alone then yield him in a strait so sore
Aias of Telamon, or spare but two,
Add Teucer with his bow, that marksman true.”
He spake, nor Aias to his word said nay,
But to Oileus’ son made speech in few :
“ Here, Aias, thou with Lycomedes stay,
And in the Danaan hearts plant valour as ye may ;

46

“ But I will help the Athenians, and, this done,
Return.” So Telamonian Aias went,
And Teucer with him, the same father’s son.
Moving along the wall their way they bent
To brave Menestheus’ tower, and succour lent
Full timely to the troop, now hardest driven ;
For mightily up from tier to battlement
Like a black storm the Lycian chiefs had striven,
And the grim fight neared on, and the noise pealed to heaven.

47

Aias of Telamon there first did slay
Sarpedon’s friend, magnanimous Epicles,
Hurling a huge and ragged stone, that lay
Hard on the ridge and ready at hand to seize.
To hold it were a task not done with ease
Now by two broad strong palms ; but Aias there
Whirled, flung ; and like a diver of the seas
The man fell from the tower and died in air,
With skull-bones smashed together and four-plumed helmet
fair.

48

Then Teucer Glaucus as he scaled the wall
Shot, where the arm showed bare. To earth he sprang,
Loth to be seen and mocked at for his fall.
But when Sarpedon knew it, a dire pang
Came o'er him ; and like fire he forward sprang,
Pierced brave Alcmaon, and drew out the brass,
He following prone ; the gilded harness rang.
Sarpedon hurrying to breach wide the pass
A battlement seized, and tugged, and tore off the whole mass.

49

Whom on the naked wall huge Aias met
And Teucer, who with shaft the breast-band smote
Of the man's shield ; for high Zeus warded yet
Doom from his child. Then Aias at his throat
Dashed with fell spear, and on the shield it wrote,
But could not pierce it. Yet he bated ground,
Though raging, and drew back, but not remote,
For still the glory of fight his spirit enwound !
There to the godlike Lycians he cried, turning round :

50

" Lycians, why fail ye thus with laggard feet ?
'Tis hard for me alone, how strong soe'er,
To break down walls and guide you to the fleet.
Come, help : to work with many is far more fair !"
He spake : they, loathing his sharp scorn to bear,
Thundered in heavier storm around their king.
Also the Argives in dread haste prepare
Their files within the wall, and shore each wing,
For in their eyes now loomed a great and terrible thing.

51

For neither could the Lycians Argos wrack,
Nor burst the barrier and tear down the gate,
Nor could the Argive ranks hurl Lycia back.
As two fierce men concerning bounds debate,
Each brawling against each for equal rate,
With rods in hand, on field of common right ;
So did the ridge now part them in dire hate.
And from each side came rattling in the fight
Blows on the fair round shields and targes feathery light.

52

And many with the pitiless brass were slain,
Alike who turning did his back lay bare,
And whom the shield itself now fenced in vain.
Each tower and battlement stood reeking there,
Dashed with red gore : nor could the foe yet scare
The Danaans, but they still made even head ;
As some poor woman, in her dealings fair,
Trims in her scales the soft wool with the lead,
Poising, to earn sad pittance for her children's bread,

53

So poised the battle hung, till Zeus endowed
Hector with loftier glory, Priam's son,
Who past the wall leapt first, and cried aloud :
" Horsemen of Troy, charge, and the wall is won ;
Then take up fire, and to the fleet pass on !"
So cried he ; and they heard him with their ears,
And sea-like on the rampire dashed anon
Together, and set their feet upon the tiers,
While like a hedge came up their brazen-pointed spears.

54

But Priameïan Hector grasped a stone
That by the gates lay heavy on the plain,
Huge, tapering to a point, a broad-based cone,
Which two men, strongest that earth feeds with grain,
Could scarce with levers hoise up to a wain
Now ; but he swung it alone with ease on high.
As when a shepherd without toil or strain
Lifts in one hand, nor cumbered is thereby,
A shorn ram's fleece, so Hector with it moved to try

55

The broad valves of the gates, exceeding strong.
Inside, two bars about them crosswise lay,
By one bolt fastened. And he came along,
And dashed them in the midst to open a way,
With legs set wide to give his strength more play.
Both hinges are torn off, the stone inside
By sheer weight falls, and the gates bellowing bray,
Nor can the bolt and heavy bars abide,
But from the great stone's power the valves fly sundered wide.

56

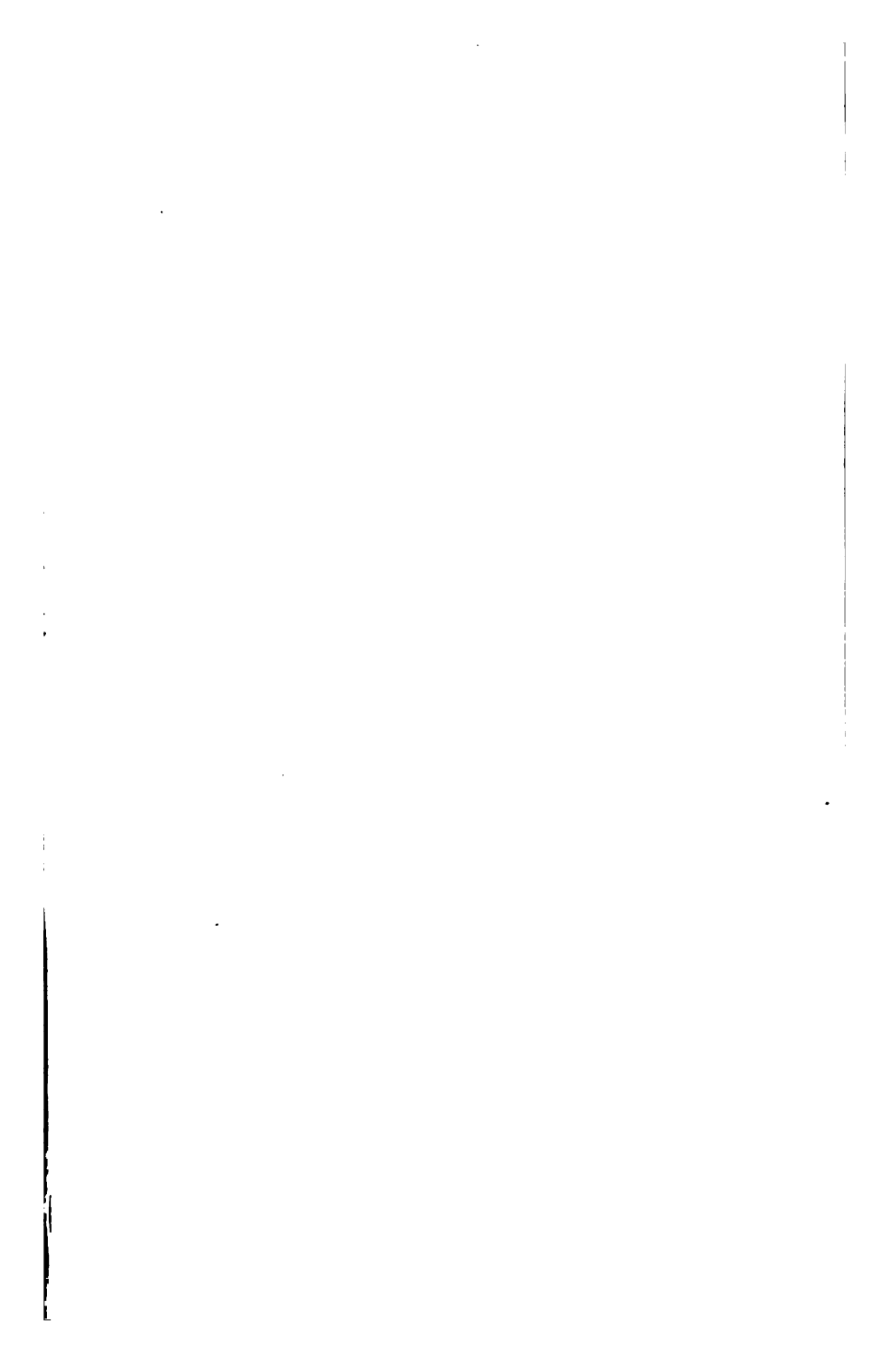
Then Hector leaping in, with brows like night,
Flamed with two spears, in brazen harness dire.
None, when he came, durst meet him in his might,
None save a god : his eyes were blazing fire.
Loud shrilled he to his men to climb up higher,
And pass the wall : they heard him and obeyed.
Part pour into the gate, part scale entire
The rampart. And the Danaans, sore dismayed,
Fly to the hollow ships, nor can the rout be stayed.

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